The Quarterly Journal of the
LIBRARY of CONGRESS

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Editor's Note

Changing Minds

Among the many original uses of materials in the Library's collections, the changing of minds stands as a purpose long thought worthy of considerable time and trouble, as some examples show.

Through a blending of Sacred and Vernacular Literacy we learn that "there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. . . . And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil." Satan's reaction bodes ill:

> Hail horror, hail
> Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell
> Receive thy new Possessor: One who brings
> A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time.

As Satan's fall was being documented, Dutch settlers were arriving in what was to become South Africa. Three centuries later an incongruous intercontinental politicocultural liaison raises colonial consciousness and consciences in that new world.
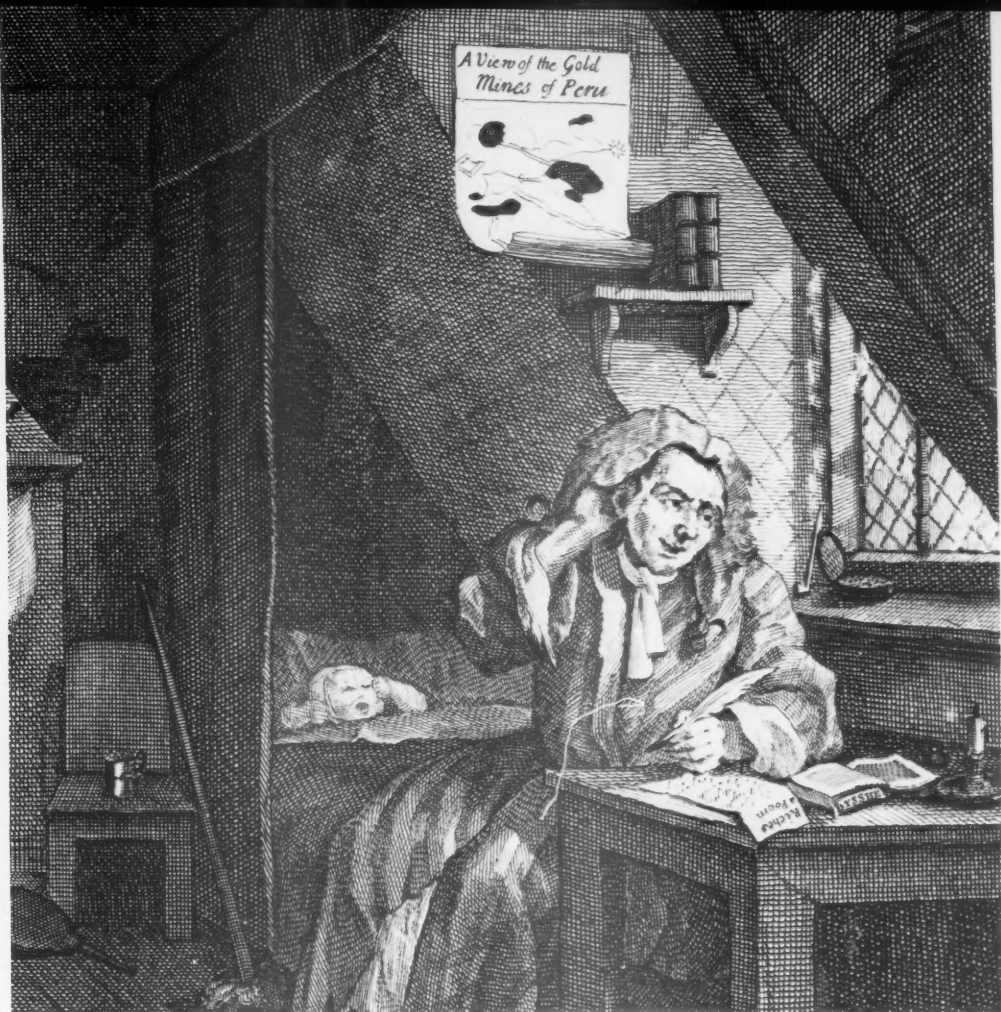
Three decades before Milton wrote of Paradise lost an attempt was made to convince Dutchmen that a new paradise had been found, that in fact Manhattan was more than just a nice place to visit.

An eighteenth-century Grub Street poet dreams of another new world, displaying a map of Peruvian gold mines. Perhaps anticipating Zbigniew Herbert's question, "so why have I been writing / unimportant poems on flowers," he composes a poem entitled *Riches*.

One might proudly say that "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" in which case changing one's mind could be thought to demonstrate a certain weakness thereof. Evidence in the Library's collections, on the other hand, supports the view that changing minds—including one's own—reflects participation on the side of the angels.

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Satirical Prints as a Source of English Social History

BY ROSEMARY BAKER

Among the most fascinating aspects of the past, although often the most difficult to ascertain, are the normal everyday living and working conditions of ordinary people. The further away the period the more difficult it becomes to discover how people lived. This is especially true of poorer people, who were often inarticulate and sometimes illiterate and of whom comparatively few personal written records remain. Social historians must search for evidence in newspapers and in court and government records. A source, however, that has perhaps not always been fully appreciated is the mass of popular prints of the day, which can offer, often in clear linear detail, a great range of visual information.

The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division has a particularly good collection of social and popular historical prints. One

THE DISTREST POET.

The Distressed Poet.
William Hogarth, 1736.

The poverty of the poet's family becomes an object of satire to Hogarth, who thought that the poet by persisting in his talentless efforts at poetry was neglecting his family. His wife, badgered by the milkmaid, is a sympathetic figure as she sits mending amid the squalor of her one-room household.

From *The Original Works of William Hogarth* (London: J. and J. Boydell, 1790). Rare Book and Special Collections Division. BMSC 2309.

A Rake's Progress.
William Hogarth, 1735.

The fourth plate from Hogarth's series, in which two bailiffs have stopped the Rake's sedan chair in St. James's street but are foiled in their attempt to arrest him for debt by a woman he had seduced and abandoned who offers them her purse. In the foreground is an interesting group of children. Two bootblacks, a newspaper-seller, and a gin-seller sit gambling by the roadside. They are barefoot and ragged, and one smokes while another steals a handkerchief from the Rake. The vices of the children are echoed by the proximity of Whites, a notorious gambling club at that period, in the background.

From *The Original Works of William Hogarth* (London: J. and J. Boydell, 1790). Rare Book and Special Collections Division. BMSC 2202.

distinct group of these is an excellent collection of British eighteenth-century prints originally put together by Windsor Castle Library in the last century and purchased by the Library of Congress in 1921. Such prints would usually be referred to nowadays as political cartoons or caricatures, but these are slightly misleading terms. The word *caricature* really refers to a particular style of art, and the word *cartoon* had a different meaning in the eighteenth century. Although many of the prints refer to contemporary politics, the range of subjects they cover is much wider. What they do all have in common is a satiric intention, and *satirical prints* is perhaps the best thing to call them.

Certainly the majority of the eighteenth-cen-

THE ENRAGED MUSICIAN.

The Enraged Musician.
William Hogarth, 1741.

A street scene filled with noisy occupations which annoy a musician. They include a ragged woman ballad-singer holding a swaddled baby, an itinerant hautbois player, a pavior, a knife-grinder, a dustman, and many more—enough, in Fielding's words, "to make a man deaf to look at."

From *The Original Works of William Hogarth* (London: J. and J. Boydell, 1790). Rare Book and Special Collections Division. BMSC 2518.

Numbers given in captions refer to the Library of Congress negative or to the British Museum Satirical Catalogue (*Catalogue of Personal and Political Satires*).

tury popular prints are concerned with politics. They were an important expression of public opinion in an age of great political corruption. When Britain was dominated by a comparatively small number of rich and powerful families and the king was still a force in political life, satire was one of the few weapons with which the powerful could be attacked and one where legal retaliation was difficult. But by no means all the prints are political. It was an age when political and social life were inextricably mixed, and many prints satirize individuals who were eminent in society or the arts or those who were simply notorious. A large number of prints—and the century produced thousands—comment

on society in general, on social manners and customs, and on attitudes and fashions. Many touch on the perennial themes of all satirists, which have moralistic undertones—the vices of pride, sloth, gluttony, and lust or the relationships of youth and age, of marriage, and of parent and child—and sometimes the subject is sheer human folly. Overall they cover a wide spectrum of activity and offer us great insights into eighteenth-century English life, and in particular the life of the less well-off.

In the early part of the century, ballads and broadsheets were still the main popular publications and organs of public expression. They were not usually illustrated, and when they were it was with crudely carved woodcuts. Prints were much more expensive both to produce and to buy, and they were not aimed at an uneducated audience. Certainly the purchaser would need to have followed the progress of current affairs of state to appreciate them. A surprising number of prints presuppose a knowledge of Latin in their readers. Prints could only be produced by professionally competent engravers. While many are vague and sketchy (some hardly more than outlines), designed to be of topical interest for a quick sale, others are intricate and detailed, complicated, and sometimes meticulously designed and beautifully produced.

Gradually the satirical print replaced the ballad as a medium of popular entertainment, and the number of prints produced increased as the century progressed. In political terms this was partly the result of the increased activity of the opposition. Right up until the end of the century, when the effects of the French Revolution began to be felt in England, prints tended to reflect the point of view of those out of power. In part it was also the result of the growing demand for parliamentary and administrative reform. At the same time, the art developed and prints became less complicated in design and execution, less dependent on words, emblems, and allegories to communicate their meaning, and simpler and more humorous, with a more immediate appeal to the eye. The techniques evolved from engravings conceived as a design in black and white to etchings in lighter outlines intended to be colored.

Because the main purpose of these prints was to provoke a specific response, to satirize, their

The Laundress.
Unsigned, ca. 1746.

Working conditions of a hard profession are ascertainable from this print. The laundress is shown as still young and attractive, not yet worn out by her arduous job. The print can be dated by the picture of the Duke of Cumberland, who became a national hero in 1746, pinned to the wall.
LC-USZ62-77778.

value now lies in part in their lack of conscious artistic qualities. It is interesting to compare the romantic—even at times sentimental—pastoral and genre scenes of rural life presented in the work of, say, George Morland or Francis Wheatley with the poverty and deprivation depicted in some satirical prints. Or to contrast the nobility and heroic drama of historic military painting with the grim realities of a soldier's life as satirized. This aspect alone is of significance to social historians examining these prints.

One artist of outstanding importance both for his own contribution to satiric art and for his influence on it is William Hogarth. Indeed the mid-eighteenth century in England is sometimes known as the Age of Hogarth, so strongly is his name associated with it. With the exception of a few notable prints, however, the works of Hogarth are not political satires. He viewed the purpose of his prints as a serious moral didactic one. It has been claimed that his prints

GAILLARDISE du COMMUN JARDIN.

The Covt Garden Morning Frolick

Invented & Engraved by L. P. Boitard. Publish'd according to Act of Parliam.t Oct.r 4, 1747. Price Six Pence. Sold by C. Mosley Engraver & Printseller in Round Court in the Strand.

The Covt: Garden Morning Frolick.
L. P. Boitard, 1747.

Early morning workers jeer at a gentleman as he is being carried home after a night of dissipation. The print shows many revealing details of eighteenth-century life. The tired chairmen, the bribed watchman, the linkboy, the child chimney sweep, the hurdy-gurdy player, and the children eating a hurried breakfast all add to the rich variety of the scene. It is interesting also to note the variety of vegetables that the woman in the foreground is selling.

LC-USZ62-77779. BMSC 2877.

ST MONDAY.

St. Monday.
Engraved by H. Roberts, ca. 1760.

A group of people are spending the first (theoretically) working day of the week in a low tavern. Most of the trades of the drinkers can be easily told from their dress or work implements.

LC-USZ62-77780. BMSC 3750 (variant).

MODERN REFORMERS.

Have ye not read in the Law how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless.—
But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. Matt chap XII ver 5, 7.
Sabbath according to Act of Parliament, Anno —0.

can be read like a book, every detail, each pictorial juxtaposition done with deliberate purpose. The extent of his influence may be appreciated in several ways: in the personal reaction he provoked, in the artistic ideas others borrowed from him, and in the numerous occasions his own prints feature specifically in some way in other prints.

Both the political and social prints are useful sources of information. A political print with intentional satire will sometimes depict the duke of Newcastle as a fishwife or Lord North as a children's nurse to demonstrate demeaning contempt for these prime ministers and incidentally provide us with an accurate picture of these professions. Prints are magnificent for what

Modern Reformers.

Unsigned, possibly after John Collet, ca. 1765.

A satire on religious reformers who sought to bring in laws restricting Sabbatarian vending. The artist shows real sympathy for the plight of the poor woman arrested for selling on Sunday and includes telling details. A man has his pocket picked while intent on the preacher. A pipe-smoking gin-seller gives a glass to the parish beadle, the man legally charged with enforcing the laws. A mutilated veteran sits in the stocks, for begging on a Sunday.

LC-USZ62-77781.

MACARONI FRENCH COOK.

Pubd. accordg to Act of Parliamt. by M. Darly 39. Strand.

A Macaroni French Cook.
Unsigned, by M. Darly, ca. 1772.

A view of an orderly kitchen. The cook is French and is shown as personifying several characteristics that English prejudice associated with the French. He is depicted as vain. His wig is elaborately dressed in the extreme height of fashion associated with the macaroni or dandy of the period, and he has a looking glass on the wall. He takes snuff affectedly, and behind him hangs a sword to suggest his pretensions. The wearing of a sword was the mark of a gentleman.

LC-USZ62-77782. BMSC 5059.

they tell us about costume. The sole purpose of some prints is to satirize the extravagances of fashionable dress, particularly the wildly exaggerated hairstyles and clothes of the 1770s and 1780s. A well-known series of prints by Mathew Darly ridicules the macaronis, dandies of the 1770s who tended to favor enormous wigs. Other prints mock the attempts of middle class or poor people to imitate the excesses of the fashions of the wealthy or attempts of people of advanced years or unsuitable figures to try to be a la mode. A great deal about costume is also revealed in prints ostensibly on other subjects: the distinctive dress of clergy, the working dress of tradesmen and laborers, changes in seasonal wear, nightwear and underwear (or rather the lack of it), the tight-lacing of women, the wigs worn by men (all but the very poorest men wore wigs), the style of eyeglasses worn (whether under or over wigs), the accessories carried (the first umbrellas to appear were the subject of much humor), the wearing of swords. There is an abundance of evidence on these aspects of dress and many other details to be found in the prints.

Prints also provide information on domestic life, covering bedroom and dressing room scenes, nursery scenes, living room, dining room, and kitchen scenes. They show the style of curtains and furniture used at different periods, the furnishings of poorer homes. Domestic scenes of the lower classes show families living, sleeping, cooking, eating, and carrying on their trades all within one room. The details of sanitary and hygienic arrangements shown are perhaps unobtainable from any other visual source. A number of prints show people at table and tell us much about the diet of the day and the kind of food eaten by different classes at different meals. Clearly all classes drank a good deal of alcohol; the wealthier drank wine, the less well-off beer, and the poorest drank gin. Prints dealing with the evils of drink, especially the evils of gin, are numerous. Some, like Hogarth's *Gin Lane*, were engraved for propaganda purposes to try to bring about amendments to the licensing laws.

We are also presented with images of people out-of-doors: people at school, traveling, at work, and at leisure, at the theater, concerts, church, masquerades, and balls; people at their

The LIBERTY of the SUBJECT.

Publish'd Oct.15th 1779. by W.Humphrey New Bond.

The Liberty of the Subject.
Unsigned, by James Gillray, 1779.

One of the most feared and hated institutions of the time was the Press Gang. Though legally empowered to impress seafaring men only, here they have seized a tailor, who can be identified as such by his tape-measure and scissors and also by his knock-knees. As tailors traditionally worked cross-legged, they were thought to become deformed from doing so. Friends of this tailor, notable among whom are several belligerent women, try vigorously to protect him from impressment.
LC-USZ62-77783. BMSC 5609.

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pastimes, watching or taking part in sports or gambling (a very popular amusement); people at public entertainments such as processions or fairs, or public hangings (for in an age of few holidays, hanging days were public holidays); and people in prisons and hospitals and many more situations.

The overwhelming majority of prints are set in London. London was the seat of government, where the king held court and Parliament met. Furthermore, it dominated the financial, artistic, and fashionable life of the country. The London depicted in prints visibly changes during the course of the century. The large shop signs that predated house numbering gradually disappear. As the years progress, the streets themselves appear cleaner, paved at the edges with barriers to separate pedestrians from vehicles, which even then would appear to have been driven on the left side of the road. Street lights and lamplighters start to be shown as the metropolis grows and prospers.

Because the Industrial Revolution and its effects largely missed London, at least during the eighteenth century, and what manufacturing industry there was tended to be in luxury goods, London trades remained mainly service or distributive. Inevitably these are the occupations most represented in prints. The illustrations of working class people would seem broadly to fall into a number of separate categories. There

The Robin Hood Society.
Unsigned, 1783.

The working-class debating society was a favorite
topic of ridicule. Its members were thought by the
educated to be ignorant and factious tradesmen.
Here they all appear with caricatured faces to stress
unrefined and plebian origins. The speaker, Jeffery
Dunstan, was a well-known dealer in old wigs,
his crippled figure probably the result of malnu-
trition.

LC-USZ62-77784. BMSC 6331.

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are shopkeepers, skilled tradesmen, and artisans
such as tailors and shoemakers, together with
prosperous butchers and innkeepers, invariably
shown as fat (possibly not only because they
were in work where it must have been assumed
they would not go short of food but also be-
cause in satiric iconography to be fat is to be
prosperous). Servants feature in many prints,
showing that many people of both sexes must
have worked in domestic service. Then there
are the laborers and retailers who worked out-
doors (the retailers often selling goods or house-
hold services such as knife grinding from door
to door), who feature in many street scenes.
Finally, there were those who earned their livings
in the streets by less creditable means, the
beggars and prostitutes. While clearly social
distinctions must have been drawn between the
skilled tradesmen and the unskilled laborers,
such distinctions are not easily discernible in the
prints. All the working classes seem to be
grouped together as "the Lower Orders."

It is, on the other hand, easy to distinguish
visually a person's trade or occupation when
looking at these prints and relatively easy to
tell his or her financial status. This is true not
only of such professionals as doctors and
lawyers but also of tradesmen, since distinctions
of dress as well as the implements or accessories
of specific trades act as indicators. Chairmen
and coachmen wear heavy caped coats, for pro-
tection from the weather. Coachmen also often
carry whips, as do postilions, who tend to wear
large boots. Footmen and pages wear uniforms
usually decorated with braid and frogging.
Cooks and butchers wear white aprons, the
cooks usually wearing caps as well whereas the
butchers have sharpening steels hanging at their
waists or carry cleavers. Watermen wear dis-
tinctive peaked caps; watchmen carry staves and
lanterns; constables carry cudgels; beadles are
distinguished by their staff of office. Dustmen
and coalheavers wear wide-brimmed leather
hats which extend to protect their necks. Hair-
dressers and tailors both carry scissors, but
tailors have tape measures and hairdressers have
combs. The carrying of a cane or the wearing of
clocked stockings are sure indications of
prosperity.

Prints can often tell us much about specific
groups of workers. Child labor was an evil that
was, as the century progressed, to become of
great concern to humanitarian reformers, and
there is ample evidence of it in prints. Not
simply of the apprentices, apprenticeship being
the normal form of training, but also the really
poor children forced to work from an early age
as linkboys, crossing-sweepers, shoeblacks, and
chimney sweeps. The child chimney sweep, who
had to climb the chimneys to sweep them, is
shown quite frequently in prints. This may
mean either that there were indeed large num-
bers of them or that they were a useful means
for an artist to make a point, using a sweep to
provide a background contrast or comment on a
fashionable scene.

Women workers too are very much in evid-
ence. Many women must have worked, particu-
larly in certain trades. Women appear to have
been much involved, for instance, in retail sell-
ing. They can be seen serving in shops and be-
hind bars in taverns and inns. There are a
number of prints featuring women milliners and,

A JOURNEY TO MALMSBURY.

A Journey to Malmsbury.
Unsigned, possibly by J. Barrow, 1784.

as might perhaps be expected, a number showing them as servants, childrens' nurses, and midwives. In street scenes as well women are usually selling, vegetables often and milk. Ballad-sellers and those selling broadsheets or "last dying speeches" in prints showing public executions are commonly women. Individuals employed in these occupations are often shown ragged and sometimes barefoot, clearly very poor, as are the gin-sellers, again largely women, who appear to be little better off than the beggars.

Beggars themselves are shown in many prints. The majority of them are female, often shown pregnant or with young children. When men are depicted begging they are mainly cripples, sometimes old soldiers or sailors still partly dressed in uniform. William Cobbett, in his *Rural Rides*, written much later, in 1823, but when the social effects of the Napoleonic wars

Perhaps the most unpleasant aspect of the eighteenth-century poor law was the provision that paupers were to be supported by their own parish. If they no longer lived there they were returned by pass-cart, a humiliating form of transport intended for vagrants. Often in a state of extreme destitution, paupers were passed by constables from county to county. Fox, a leading politician, is often shown as a pauper since it was popularly supposed (with justice) that he had personally lost a fortune by gambling, and as he was a radical his political support was thought to come from the lower classes.

LC-USZ62-77785. BMSC 6456.

Tooth Drawing in a Blacksmith's Shop.
Unsigned, possibly after Dighton, ca. 1785.
LC-USZ62-77786. See *The Country Tooth-Drawer*,
BMSC 6759.

were still very apparent, remarked on the number of beggars who had been, or who had pretended to have been, soldiers and sailors. "For want of looking well into this matter, many good and just and even sensible men are led to give to these army and navy beggars, what they refuse to others."

In spite of their apparent poverty, the street sellers are depicted in several prints as people of independent spirit, particularly the Billingsgate fishwomen, who were notoriously quarrelsome and raucously aggressive. Their willingness to defend their rights against someone (usually a foreigner) they thought had insulted them or a dandified gentleman who got in their way was well known. Many prints also show prostitutes, a group useful to the satirists for illustrating moral tales. There were a large number of them in London, and Hogarth's series of *A Harlot's Progress* must have been based on a not uncommon story.

Other distinct minorities are also clearly discernible in prints, including foreigners, Jews, and black people. All foreigners were disliked, the French—the national enemy—outstandingly so. Several prints contrast the French way of life with the English, naturally to the latter's advantage. (French prints of the period draw the same parallels with the opposite conclusions, just as naturally.) French people in England are shown as poor, ill-fed, and absurd, dressed in shabby finery. Scots were another group that aroused great antagonism in England, largely on account of the Jacobite rebellions in Scotland.

Jews are another group represented in the prints. In a clean-shaven age, beards were associated with Jews, who are invariably shown wearing them. So strong was the established image of the Jew in the national consciousness, so clear the iconography, that a Jew can be easily distinguished visually in a print. There are several prints featuring Jews which were published in 1753, when the government tried to bring in a bill to naturalize Jews living in Britain. Many of these prints hint at Jewish influence in the City of London financial community, and later, toward the end of the century, there are references to Jewish financial interests. But for the main part, the image of the Jew in eighteenth-century popular prints is of a poor peddler or trader, often shown dealing in old clothes.

The Negro is another easily distinguished figure. The number of prints which show black people is comparatively large, so much so as to suggest they were a well-established element in English life and a familiar sight in London. Lord Mansfield, giving judgment in 1772 in the Somerset case, which decided that no black person could be legally a slave in England, accepted an estimate of fifteen thousand Negroes living in England. Many more who had taken the British side during the revolutionary war were to arrive in the 1780s from America.

Most of the prints showing black people show them working in domestic service. It was fashionable for ladies of quality and the demimonde to have black page boys, but there are also pictures of black footmen and black maidservants, both girls and women. There are prints too showing black people in other occupations: as soldiers and sailors, musicians, actresses, waiters, and innkeepers. A print of 1784, not, alas,

in the Library of Congress collection, shows the duchess of Devonshire soliciting a black inn-keeper for his vote on behalf of Fox in the Westminster election. Westminster had at that time both the most populous and the most socially extensive suffrage for a parliamentary seat. Rarely are black people included in London scenes with satiric intent. Only later, in the nineteenth-century, are their ethnic origins treated in a supposedly humorous fashion. Not until the movement to abolish the slave trade gathered strength, in about 1790, did the plight of black people itself become the subject of comment.

Soldiers and sailors appear in a lot of prints because Britain was involved in wars, on and off, for well over half the century and because the conduct of these wars was a major subject of political satire. There is a disparity in the representation of the two in image and treat-ment. The sailor is a bellicose figure, recogniz-able by his short jacket and loose-fitting trous-ers, standing at times as a counterpart for the spirit of Britain, comparable to John Bull. He has a "good fellow" image, protecting his coun-try at sea and genial and generous on land, if somewhat unfamiliar with shore life. The sailor stands up for his rights, is rarely tricked, de-fends himself and his mates from all abuse (real or imagined), and is always ready for a fight. Sailors frequently appear in mobs, especially in scenes of election crowds.

In contrast, the soldier is usually shown as downtrodden, unmilitary, bullied, listless, and lorded over by inefficient and effeminate officers. He is tricked by wily recruiting sergeants and unscrupulous women. In war he is the victim of incompetence, in peace a financial burden to the country, in old age a mutilated and forgotten beggar. There are several prints commenting adversely on German troops serving in England during the 1750s, and this is a reflection both of the general dislike of foreigners and also of the strong feelings aroused by the idea of a standing army, which dated back to the time of Cromwell.

In addition to providing factual visual infor-mation, satirical prints also perform another use-ful function for social historians in that they provide usually unconscious social comment. Be-cause they show us people in their everyday environments and in situations which reflect the

[Tooth Drawing in London.]
Unsigned, possibly after Dighton, ca. 1785.

A contrast in dental styles. In one print a village blacksmith is performing amateur dental surgery. In its pair, a wealthy family, living among sur-roundings of considerable opulence, is visited at home by a dentist. The settings of both prints provide excellent period backgrounds. Both patients, though, would appear to be receiving treatment of the same quality.

LC-USZ62-77787. See *The London Dentist*, BMSC 6760.

relationships between different classes and groups in society, they reveal a good deal about attitudes, assumptions, and values.

Comparatively few of the prints are concerned intentionally with social issues as such, though at times, usually during wars or financial depres-sions, they show an awareness of the problems of the poor. Toward the end of the century a greater feeling of social injustice becomes ap-parent in some political prints. Certain profes-sions are regarded, fairly consistently, in an unfavorable light. Lawyers are frequently repre-sented as crafty and grasping, men who ensure that cases take so long that clients are reduced

Loo in the Kitchin or High Life below Stairs.

Loo in the Kitchin or High Life Below Stairs.
Engraved by Cruickshank after Woodward, 1799.

A group of servants gathered in a comfortably furnished kitchen ape the manners, language, and vices of their employers.

LC-USZ62-77788.

to penury while the lawyers themselves take the profit. The medical profession too is not always highly respected. Doctors are drawn disputing diagnosis and treatment among themselves while the patient dies. It is implied that they are little more than quacks, as indeed many of them must have been.

Anticlericalism is another constant theme. Some of the very earliest satirical prints deal with clerical behavior. Eighteenth-century prints usually attack the wealth of the higher clergy, contrasting it with the poverty of the poor curates and of the villagers forced to contribute tithes, a subject that is occasionally treated in such a way as to display real regard for the victims. Nonconformist clergy do not escape the

satirists either, their enthusiasm being interpreted as hypocrisy. Catholics were generally hated and, to a certain degree, feared, because Catholicism was associated with absolutist regimes and the threat of foreign invasion.

There is a genuine sense of injustice in certain prints that deal with the disparity in the treatment of full-pay and half-pay military and naval officers. The suggestion is that those in senior posts have achieved their preferment through influence, as was often the case, while others who had served their country well are discarded in poverty and need in peacetime. There are sympathetic prints as well on the problems of declining trade, often exemplified in the weaving industry. Weaving was an industry that employed many people with a wide range of skills. Silk weaving, especially that at Spitalfields in London, was vulnerable to economic fluctuations as the necessary raw materials had to be imported and war could disrupt the supply. A frequent visual expression of trade depressed or in decline, or simply of bad times in general, is

an unused loom, broken or covered in cobwebs, or, alternatively, a spinning wheel in disrepair. Another symbol of depression is a ship displaying a broom at the masthead to indicate that it is for sale.

By the end of the century, noticeably during the Napoleonic wars, the farmer takes over as a sign of waxing or waning prosperity and expresses strong views on taxation. By then the figure of John Bull, a fat, cantankerous, chauvinistic, grumbling countryman, exploited by politicians, burdened by taxes, but intrinsically a man of common sense, had become established as the personification of the national image. There are a number of prints which refer to taxes, in particular to the much-hated excise duties on certain commodities, and a few—too few—referring to the repressive game laws.

Other prints reveal a good deal about class attitudes. The middle class citizen who tries to better himself socially is a constant source of humor. He is usually a well-off tradesman, invariably a Londoner, of whom John Gilpin is perhaps the archetype, who tries to imitate the style and manners of the gentry. His horsemanship, his carriage, his clothes, his country house, his attempts to learn to dance, his children's education, and his Sunday excursions are all the subject of satiric comment, of which Henry William Bunbury is probably the most frequent illustrator. Another recurrent theme is that of the poorer tradesman or laborer who spends his time usually in clubs or taverns discussing affairs of state or debating philosophical concepts.

But by no means all prints reflect a picture of the upper classes laughing at the lower. The reverse is also true. Although servants are shown copying the manners and follies of their employers, this is itself a form of satire and they are often shown laughing at them and their more foolish pretensions or extravagances. The servants are used as the voice, or at least the look, of common sense. At a time when the mob and mob violence could be a frightening reality, many prints present a picture of a working class that could be independent minded, willing to defend and protect its own, and, thus, in no way subservient. A number of prints, increasingly toward the later years of the century, reflect the vocally expressed views of the lower orders, who become less inclined to smirk silently and more

The Pious Coachman!!

The Pious Coachman!!
Woodward, 1802.

Fifty years earlier the humorous response of a coachman to his prospective employer's request would not have been thought a subject of satire. This is one of many comic prints of the turn of the century in which the lower classes answer back. LC-USZ62-77789.

apt to answer back. A growing articulateness became apparent, worrying people scared by the excesses of Jacobinism in France. As the movement for political and social reform gained strength and the demand for wider educational opportunities grew, so did the satirical treatment of these matters. A group of prints on "The March of Intellect" in the 1820s mock the spread of education along with the technological inventions of the time.

As public life in Britain became less corrupt, prints became less personal and less savage in their attacks. They degenerated, if the word can be so used, from satire into a more innocuous comic art, becoming more humorous in their appeal to us now but less historically revealing. For this reason, the satirical prints in the Windsor Castle Library collection offer particularly fascinating insights into a period of great social change in Britain.

ROSEMARY BAKER, who has a degree in history from Oxford University, is currently working on an index volume for the British Museum Catalogue of Personal and Political Satires for the Years 1320 to 1770.

G.K. Benda

POSTERS

A Collectible Art Form

BY ELENA G. MILLIE

Through copyright, gift, purchase, and exchange programs, the Library of Congress has assembled a collection of posters unrivaled anywhere in the world for its breadth, variety, and international nature. The nucleus of the collection, now numbering some seventy-thousand posters, was formed when Congress in 1870 passed legislation making the Library of Congress the depository for all works copyrighted in the United States. Posters were among the items held in district courts and other agencies from earlier copyright deposits that were then transferred to the Library. Copyright deposits have since continued to augment the collection. In 1960 the Library began actively collecting posters to supplement these deposits, encouraging other institutions to make gifts or exchange duplicate posters. Acquisitions are

Mistinguett

G. K. Benda.
Lithograph, Philippe G. Dreyfus, Editeur, Paris, ca. 1913, 161 x 120 cm.
Exchange.

G. K. Benda, born in Paris, was primarily a painter of portraits, still lifes, and landscapes. He participated in the Indépendants movement of 1907 and showed his works mainly at the Salon d'automne between 1909 and 1921.

Mistinguett was the famous Parisian music hall singer who appeared frequently with a fifteen-pound headdress of egret feathers, together with a twenty-five foot feather train.

sought to fill gaps and strengthen holdings in such areas as 1920s era posters, Art Deco designs, and Constructivist and Bauhaus style posters, as well as to represent new styles and current poster production.

The Library of Congress collection is unique in representing every major country in the world. Among the especially well represented foreign countries are France, Germany, Japan, and Switzerland. The largest poster collection in Europe, housed at the Kunstgewerbe Museum in Zurich, is composed mainly of Swiss posters. Other significant collections are found at such institutions as the Muzeum Plakatu at Wilanov in Warsaw, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Musée de l'affiche in Paris, and the Deutsches Plakatmuseum in Essen.

The 1870 copyright law preceded by a decade the development in France of the poster as an art form. Most earlier posters, aside from French book posters and the large colorful American circus or theater posters done for billboards, were either crude woodcuts or lithographs. It was circus posters that inspired the young French artist Jules Chéret to create a new art form—the art poster—by refining the newly invented process of color lithography. The golden age of the poster was dominated by the Art Nouveau style. All over Europe posters flourished as an effective means of advertising, with designs by such artists as Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard, and Steinlen.

Not until 1889 did the use of posters designed

No Apartheid

Anonymous.
Offset lithography, printed in Cuba for the Committee of Youth Organizations, USSR, 1970s, 86 x 61 cm.
Gift of Gary Yanker, to be added to his "Prop Art" Collection.

Apartheid, an Afrikaans word meaning apartness, was coined in 1944 by Daniel F. Malan, leader of the National party in South Africa. The Nationalist program of apartheid, a systematic policy of differentiating between racial groups of South Africa, began around 1948. Because of the growing rejection and condemnation of apartheid, the South African government dropped the word from its official vocabulary during the early 1960s. The practice of racial segregation continues, however.

The New York collector Gary Yanker, author of *Prop Art: Over 1000 Contemporary Posters* (1972), has given approximately four thousand propaganda posters to the Library of Congress. International in scope, covering the period from 1965 to 1980, this unique collection is an invaluable source for research.

Vallauris — 1956 Exposition

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973).
Linoleum cut, 1956, 99 x 66 cm.
Signed in red pencil by the artist.
Swann Collection.

When Picasso moved to the south of France after World War II, he worked for the first time in ceramics and returned to his earlier interests in sculpture and printmaking. Some of his best-known linoleum cuts were made in Vallauris, advertising the local bullfights and shows of his own pottery.

Erwin Swann began to collect original drawings for caricatures, cartoons, and illustrations in the mid-1960s. By the time of his death in 1973, he possessed more than three thousand drawings and a number of printed graphic works, among them twenty-five posters. As a memorial to Erwin Swann and his wife, Caroline, the executors of his estate placed the collection in the Library of Congress, along with a fund for its use, increase, and maintenance.

by artists as an advertising medium catch on in the United States. In that year the French artist Eugène Grasset designed a poster to advertise *Harper's* magazine, and in 1893 Harper's had Edward Penfield design a whole series of such posters. American collectors began buying and displaying posters as art.

From about 1905 to 1933, German and Austrian artists took the lead in turning poster design in an expressionist direction, emphasizing emotive values of form and color. From the fanciful designs of Art Nouveau, posters moved toward Art Deco, where form and function were seen as interrelated. Technology, too, contributed to poster design, as photomontage and a new typography were used after the turn of the century. Later, in the 1930s, photography became a prominent element in the design of posters.

The psychedelic art movement of the 1960s, borrowing heavily from the Art Nouveau style of the turn of the century, created an imaginative new poster style. In many different countries, students, leftwing and rightwing groups, Third World partisans, and other minority and counterculture factions committed to the idea of protest discovered the effective yet cheap form

Ambassadeurs — Yvette Guilbert
Théophile Alexandre Steinlen (1859-1923).
Lithograph, Charles Verneau, Paris, 1894, 181 x 79 cm.
Exchange.

Steinlen came to Montmartre from Switzerland at the age of twenty-one and became one of the four or five great poster artists of his time. He was known as a "chatophile convaincu" (a dyed-in-the-wool cat lover), and the cat became almost a symbol of Steinlen's work.

"Ambassadeurs" is a poster for the famous Parisian singer Yvette Guilbert, shown wearing the black gloves that were her trademark. Yvette Guilbert was born in Paris in 1868 and made her acting debut at Les Bouffes du Nord in 1890. She was a popular comic singer in the leading cafés and theaters of Paris and also toured England, Germany, and the United States.

of publicity the poster could bring to their causes. An interest in poster collecting revived, and serious poster dealers and poster shops sprang up in the sixties as they had in the 1890s.

Exhibits across the country and in Europe have encouraged public awareness of the poster as a serious art form. New museums, international exhibitions, and major auctions have resulted from the current enthusiasm for posters. Among the numerous books published during the 1970s about posters are *A Concise History of Posters*, by John Barnicoat (London: Thames & Hudson, 1972), *The Rise and Fall of the Poster*, by Maurice Rickards (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), and *The Poster in History*, by Max Gallo, translated by Alfred and Bruni Mayor (Feltham: Hamlyn, 1974).

Today posters are considered serious art, and these colorful sheets of paper once intended to have a wall life of only two months can no longer be considered insignificant or ephemeral. They are a persuasive art form, reflecting subtle changes in society through their popular imagery. They reveal trends, styles, events, and significant developments of their times and thus supply the political and social historian with a rich source of visual documentation.

ELENA G. MILLIE is curator of the poster collection at the Library of Congress.

The Forth-Bridge, L.N.E.R. East Coast Route

Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956).
Lithograph, The Avenue Press, London, ca. 1914-1917,
   102 x 127 cm.
Exchange.

Frank Brangwyn, an artist famous for his World War II posters, grew up in Bruges, a city filled with bridges. It was perhaps in his youth that his love for bridges began. In England he was awed by the newness of the Forth Bridge, which was made from 51,000 tons of steel and cost about 3 million pounds. With Walter Shaw Sparrow, he was co-author of the *Book of Bridges*.

PARK SOUTH GALLERY
AT CARNEGIE HALL

Art Nouveau
Art Deco
Original Posters
885 Seventh Avenue
New York City
New York 10019
212 757-5169

Carnaval Ostende

James Ensor (1860-1949).
Lithograph, 1931, 47 x 33 cm.
Purchase.

This rare Belgian poster by James Ensor, seldom seen, is thought to be one of only two posters he designed. The other poster, also a lithograph, was made for an exhibition of his work at the Salon des cent, an exhibition hall for posters and small works of graphic art in Paris.

James Ensor, a painter and printmaker, is considered one of the most important and individualistic artists of his time and one who greatly influenced the development of modern art. He was among the original members of the avant-garde "Groupe des XX" organization, which was formed in Brussels in 1883. He also exhibited frequently at La Libre esthétique.

Ensor grew up in Ostend, on the Belgian coast, a place he dearly loved. In his early years, he lived above his family's shop, which sold masks for Ostend's annual carnival. Later, when he became an established artist, he often included masks in his prints and paintings, and they are considered by some to be his trademark. In fact, he called himself a "painter of masks and of the sea." National recognition came to him in 1929, when Ensor was made a baron by King Albert I, and a bust of the artist was placed in the square at Ostend.

Park South Gallery at Carnegie Hall

Patrick Nagel (b. 1945).
Silkscreen, 1979, Mirage Editions, Santa Monica, Calif.,
    63 x 43 cm.
Copyright deposit.

Patrick Nagel, a painter, illustrator, and commercial designer, has taught at the Art Center in Los Angeles. He has had several one-man shows of both his paintings and his graphics, and his illustrations are published frequently in *Playboy* magazine. Recently he has been working in France for Mirage Editions.

Park South Gallery is one of the major galleries specializing in the sale of the classic poster. It has recently secured the American rights to reproduce the posters of the old masters of poster art. Printed by the original method but substituting aluminum plates for stones, these poster reproductions are published in a different size to clearly distinguish them from the originals.

Mirage Editions, under the directorship of Karl Bornstein, began publishing limited-edition posters around 1977. Only 1,200 copies are printed for each poster, with no reprinting. Their striking design and proficient execution are making these posters collector's items. Two Mirage Editions posters have won first-place citations in the National Graphic Arts Awards competition sponsored by the Printing Industries of America.

© 1979 Mirage Editions

Madama Butterfly, Metropolitan Opera

Larry Rivers (b. 1922).
Offset, Circle Gallery, 1978, 61 x 92 cm.
Purchase.

Larry Rivers was one of eight artists commissioned to interpret major operas of the repertoire of the Metropolitan Opera Association in New York. The artists' works brought "art to opera lovers and the opera to art lovers."

© 1978 Circle Gallery, Met Opera. Courtesy Circle Gallery/Metropolitan Opera Association.

Cleveland Cycles

Pal (Jean de Paléologue) (1860-1942)
Lithograph, ca. 1897, Imp. Paul Dupont, Paris, 143 x 107 cm.
Purchase.

Pal, though Romanian by birth, pursued all his studies in Paris. He was one of the few designers of the period who understood the technique of color lithography well enough to put his own touches on the stones.

Pal designed several posters for the Paris distributor for the American Cleveland Cycles, all showing an Indian riding a bicycle.

Sport Nautique — Régate et Chapeau à Plumes

Auguste Donnay (1862-1981).
Lithograph, Gordinne, Liège, ca. 1895, 85 x 66 cm.
Purchase.

Auguste Donnay was a well-known Belgian
painter, illustrator, and poster designer who
exhibited frequently in Brussels at La Libre esthé-
tique, a cultural and exhibition society which was
formed in 1893. This poster was used to advertise
the regatta sponsored by the Societé royale du
sport nautique de la Meuse.

The Library purchased this poster in the mid
1960s as part of a deliberate effort to represent
important artists missing from the poster collections.

Blom & van der AA: A-Z

Louis Raemaekers (1869-1956).
Lithograph, ca. 1920, 59 x 40 cm.
Exchange.

L ouis Raemaekers, a Dutch cartoonist, was famous
for his anti-German drawings during World
War I. He designed about twelve hundred of these
cartoons, which were reproduced in many of the
Allied countries and sold over a million copies in
the United States alone. At one time he was put in
prison for disturbing the neutrality of Holland with
them.

In 1940, Raemaekers came to the United States
for an exhibition of his drawings at Holland House
in New York. The unusual design of "Blom & van
der AA: A-Z" by Raemaekers emphasizes the wide
range of insurance policies being offered by this
firm.

Patin-Bicyclette, Richard-Choubersky

Pal (Jean de Paléologue) (1860-1942).
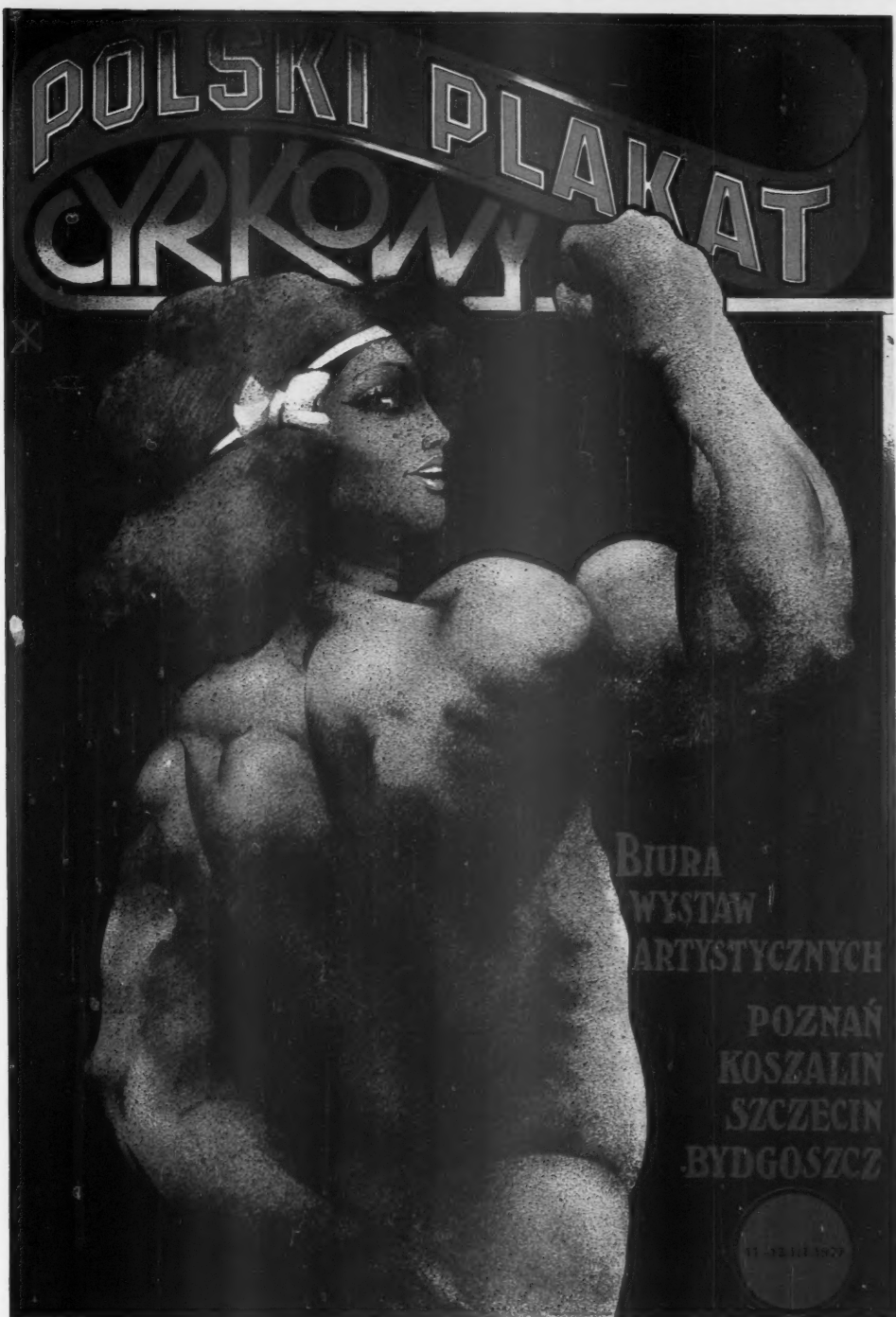Lithograph, Imp. Paul Dupont, Paris, 1890s, 129 x 92 cm.
Exchange.

J ean de Paléologue was born in Romania, worked
in England under the name of Julius Price and in
Paris under the name of Pal, and died in Miami,
Florida. He was the creator of thousands of illustra-
tions and hundreds of posters. He came to the
United States in 1900, apparently with Sarah Bern-
hardt.

Polski Plakat Cyrkowy

Waldemar Swierzy (b. 1931).
Offset, 1977, 94 x 66 cm.
Exchange.

W aldemar Swierzy has been a designer of posters
for almost thirty years. His posters have won
him a number of prizes, among them the Grand
Prix Toulouse-Lautrec in Versailles in 1956 and the
Gold Medal at the International Poster Biennale in
Warsaw in 1976. In 1980, he was chosen to be the
president of the Poster Biennale in Warsaw.

Advertising an exhibition of Polish circus posters,
this example shows Swierzy's skill at combining
color and ironic imagery into a striking design.

Trotting-Club — Levallois

Lithograph, Imp. Emile Lévy & Cie., Paris, 1893, 92 x 192 cm.
Purchase.

Emile Lévy is considered one of the three most important poster printers in France up through the end of the nineteenth century. A designer as well, Lévy produced hundreds of posters, mainly for concerts, circuses, theaters, and cabarets.

Samuel Franklin Cody (1861-1913), shown in this lithograph, a Texas cowboy and Wild West show performer, was no relation to Col. William F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody. Trick riding and shooting were Samuel Cody's specialties. He was also an inventor of kites, airship engines and propellers, and airplanes. On the side, he was a playwright.

While on a tour of France in 1893, he challenged Terron, a famous cyclist who had just created a new record by pedaling from St. Petersburg, Russia, to Paris. Instead it was Meyer, the champion French cyclist, who took up the challenge, however. He lost his match against Cody at the Trotting Club in Levallois-Peret.

Cody was a tremendous success in France and was hailed wherever he appeared with cheers and shouts of "Vive Cody!"

Cendrillon — Musique de J. Massenet

Emile Bertrand.
Lithograph, Devambez Grav.-Imp., Paris, 1899, 80 x 59 cm.
Exchange.

Emile Bertrand, painter and engraver, was an exhibiting member of the Salon des artistes français. *Cendrillon (Cinderella)* was the first of several Massenet works created at the Opéra-comique during the tenure of its great director Albert Carré.

Panurge

Haulte Farce Musicale en 3 Actes de M.M.
Georges Spitzmuller
et Maurice Boukay

Massenet

Panurge — Massenet

Charles Lucien Léandre (1862-1930).
Lithograph, 1913, 90 x 63 cm.
Exchange.

The artist Léandre began his career in Paris painting decorative pictures for hotels. He studied at the Académie des beaux-arts with Alexandre Cabanel and later won many honors for his paintings. He was very active in artists' organizations and is best remembered for his caricatures, many of which he drew for the French periodical *Le Rire*.

Panurge made its debut eight months after Massenet's death. The role of Panurge was sung by Vanni Marcoux, and that of his wife, Colombe, by Lucy Arbell. This was the last time Arbell was to sing in a Massenet opera.

The Horse Fair (*overleaf*)

Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899).
Lithograph, W. J. Morgan & Co., Lithographers, Cleveland, [1885], 106 x 202 inches (24 sheets).
Gift of George W. Morgan, Jr.

Marie Rosalie Bonheur (1822-1899), better known as simply Rosa Bonheur, began her career as an artist at the age of thirteen. Her father, a struggling artist himself at the time, discovered her talent when he found a small oil painting she had done. He became her only instructor. "Be original," was his device. "Create your own style, be bold when you draw. Line is important; draw the same thing again and again until you get it right." Rosa Bonheur thus spent much of her early life in the Louvre copying works of art. She won a gold medal and first prize at the Salon of 1848.

When Rosa Bonheur decided to paint "The Horse Fair," she disguised herself as a boy so that she could spend many days sketching around the horse fairs in Paris; she also borrowed horses from the Paris Omnibus Company to bring to her studio. After a year and a half spent perfecting her drawings of each horse and rider and then painting them finally on canvas, she completed the largest work any animal painter had ever produced.

She exhibited "The Horse Fair" at the Salon of 1853, and the jury was so impressed with the exceptional talent the painting represented that it voted to exempt her works from examination by the Jury of Admission in the future, an exceptional honor.

She later painted a smaller version of "The Horse Fair," which had become an overwhelmingly popular success after the Salon of 1853, so that an engraver could make a plate from it and sell prints to the public. She also made a tiny watercolor, a pencil sketch, and a second small oil copy.

The W. J. Morgan Company made this lithograph around 1885 from the original 16-foot by 8-foot painting which hangs today in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It was the first twenty-four-sheet billboard poster ever printed, and won gold medals at the 1889 Paris Exposition and the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. These were great days for the circus and for burlesque tours, and the Morgan Company, with this huge-format advertisement, provided show business with a new, spectacular selling device. The Barnum and Bailey Circus decided to order its first twenty-four-sheet billboard after seeing the Morgan Company lithograph displayed in Florida.

According to George W. Morgan, Jr., great-grandson of W. J. Morgan and donor of "The Horse Fair," the lithograph was made by about ten artists, one of whom was probably Archibald Willard, painter of "The Spirit of '76," who was with the Morgan Company at that time. The lithograph includes around twenty different colors, indicating that over 480 stones were required in the printing process. This he feels would have necessitated printing an edition of at least a hundred copies in order to achieve the correct color matching from section to section. Today, he believes, there are only two complete copies of the great poster in existence.

"The Horse Fair" lithograph, which took three to five years to complete, was a major accomplishment for the 1880s.

W.J.Morgan&Co.
LITH. CLEVELAND.O
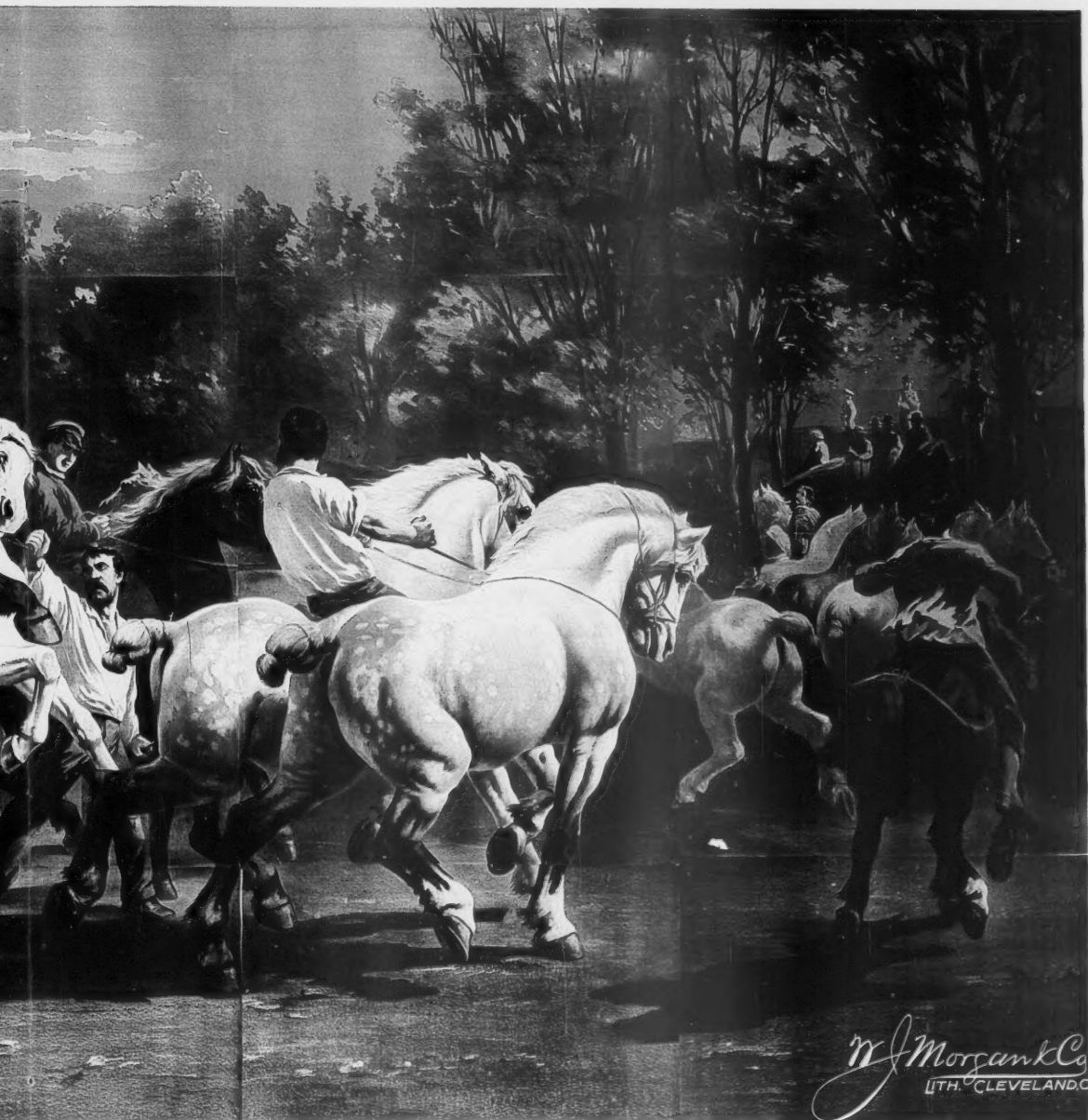
1980 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival

Phillip Collier (b. 1950).
Silkscreen, 1980, 85 x 56 cm.
Edition: 1,354/10,000.
Copyright deposit, ProCreations, New Orleans.

Phillip Collier, at present an art director in a New Orleans advertising firm, has won fifty regional awards in design. He also took first prize in the international typography competition sponsored by *U&LC*. Best known for his poster designs, he also does pen-and-ink illustration.

ProCreations was founded in 1975 with the specific goal of producing quality graphics for the general public using the silkscreen technique, selected for its ability to produce pure and saturated colors. The editions are large but limited and numbered, and posters are widely available for sale here and abroad. They are designed to celebrate well-known events, such as the New Orleans Jazz Festival.

MAP OF
MANHATTAN
1639

This extremely rare portrayal of "Manatus situated on the North River" is the earliest known map of Manhattan and its environs. It is oriented with West at the top of the sheet, a common practice on many maps of seaboard colonies in America until the eighteenth century, and hence the North River (now the Hudson River) flows into New York Bay from the right. ❧ The 1639 dating of the map is derived from a note in the references that reads in translation "Five bouweries of the Company, three of which are now (anno 1639) again occupied." The map may well have been drawn to encourage settlement in the struggling Dutch colony that had been founded only fifteen years before. ❧ Although unsigned, the map is reputed to have been drawn by Johannes Vingboons, cartographer to the Prince of Nassau, for the West India Company of Holland. It was once part of a manuscript atlas of the Western Hemisphere belonging to the firm of Gerard Hulst van Keulen, a well-known Dutch publisher of sea atlases and pilots for over two centuries. The Manatus map is one of several from this atlas that were acquired in 1887 by the distinguished lawyer, historian, and bibliographer Henry Harrisse, who bequeathed to the Library of Congress his entire collection of maps, publications, and papers pertaining to the early exploration of America. ❧ The original Manatus survey has not survived, but three nearly identical copies were apparently made from the same original about thirty years later. The Library of Congress copy is the only one in America; the other two are in the Vatican Library and the Medicea-Laurenziana Library in Florence. ❧ Beautifully executed in pen-and-ink and watercolor wash, the map covers Manhattan Island, Governors Island, Staten Island, upper and lower New York Bay, and the adjacent shores of New York and New Jersey. Drawn in the style of a typical nautical chart of the period, it features a large sixteen-point compass rose with thirty-two wind rays radiating from it. The rays are colored in the traditional sequence of black, red, green, and red. Ships' anchorages and depths of water (soundings) are indicated off Sandy Hook and the southern tip of Manhattan Island. Shoals are represented by dotted lines in lower New York Bay and Raritan Bay. Hell Gate, here spelled "Helle Gadt" is identified in the East River. ❧ The principal feature of the Manatus map is its depiction of plantations and *bouweries* or small farms on Manhattan Island and its environs. These widely dispersed settlements are keyed by number in the lower right-hand corner to a list of land occupants. The list of references also records the locations of Fort Amsterdam (A), a grist mill (B), two sawmills (C and D), and "Quarters of the Blacks, the Company's Slaves" (F). Also delineated on the map are a few roads depicted by dashed lines and four Indian villages situated in what is now Brooklyn.

RICHARD W. STEPHENSON
Geography and Map Division

The Map of Manhattan is reproduced on the following pages.
Facsimiles of this and other rare maps are available from the Library of Congress. For information on how to order, see the Recent Publications section at the back of this issue.

MAN
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Riui

Staten Eylant.

wick Quawanck

conyn
Eylant

Terkkinis

Hoogen Hoeck

Saut Puite

Diz facroin Hu
Perovende as mil
k S

ATVS
op de Noot
ier

Achter 't Col

Noort Rivier

Roode
Hoeck

t' Eÿland Manatus

Mars tewick

Aenwÿsing de voornaemste Plaetsen op de
MANATVS

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2,3,4,5,6	vÿff vervallen Bouwerÿen vaude Comp die ledich staen wadr van nu @ 1639 weder 3 bewoont wort
7	Plantage van Tonis Sanders
8	Plantage van Ort Jan
9	Plantage van Jan Pieterß
10	Plantage van Twiller
11	Plantage van Boer backer
12	Planta van M. Jsla de Nicr Sinx
13	Planta van Tomas Bets
14	Planta van Jan van Rotterdam
15	Planta van Hendrick Pieterß
16	Brouwerÿ van Boer Bucks
17	Planta van Jacob Collaer
18	Bouwer van Cornelis van Thien Hoven en
19	bouwerÿ van Jan omtengiß
20	Bouw van Twille in 't hi'ghar
21	Bouw van Jonikuer
22	Bou van Antoni du Turck
23	Bou van Jan Clatien
24	Plan van David de Provoost
25	Plan van Hendrick de Snÿder
26	Plan van Tymon Jansß
27	Bou van van voorst
28	ž
29	Bou van Jan Eduese
30	Plan op de latere Hoeck
31	drÿ Plant op Pemiles Hoeck
32	Plan van Maeryscus
33	Plan van David de Dicter
34	nieuwe Eÿlan met Ein Plan van Twiller
35	twie legen in 3 Planta van Paun backvÿ
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40	Bou van Ditrÿck d' norman
41	Bou van Cosÿn
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43	Bÿ oniten Bou van Tonas Pronck
44	Planta van Pieter Schorstien dr
45	Plantn van de Snÿder
A	't Fort Amsterdam
B	Coren Moelen
C	Saeg Moelen
D	Sedg Moelen
F	't Quartier van de Swarte de Comp Slaven

Looking Back from the Invention of Printing

BY M. T. CLANCHY

The invention of European printing in the middle of the fifteenth century is commonly seen as the starting point of a new age. Modern and progressive times begin with printing; the period preceding it is "medieval" in the journalistic sense of being "primitive." Without printing, literacy could never have advanced and our modern world would have been inconceivable. In this way of thinking the invention of printing is associated with the Renaissance, which revived classical learning, and the Reformation, which brought knowledge to the people. The thousand years of European history between 450 and 1450 then became a negative time, the Middle Ages, sandwiched between the classical world of antiquity and the modern world of progress. This sort of presentation fails to put the invention of European printing, and the literate culture which produced it, into a sufficiently long historical perspective.

Although such crude periodization is now largely confined to outdated surveys of western

The colophon of Peter Schoeffer, from *Decisiones novae et antiquae rotae romanae,* which he printed in Mainz in 1477. Canon Law Collection, Law Library.

civilization or world history, scholarly historians are still obliged to overdramatize change when presenting their research to the public. The history of medieval literacy has suffered from this. For example, Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin entitled their work on the effects of printing *L'Apparition du Livre* (translated as *The Coming of the Book*), and Margaret B. Stillwell entitled hers *The Beginning of the World of Books, 1450 to 1470.* These are excellent works, but their titles tend to reinforce old prejudices, since the book (as distinct from the papyrus rolls of antiquity) made its appearance in the fourth century, not the fifteenth, and beginning the world of books was the achievement of medieval monks and not of printers. The equally excellent and more recent work by Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979), may have a similar unintended effect because it highlights (most appropriately within its own terms of reference) the differences between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the Middle Ages rather than the features they have in common. Just as well argued a case might be made for the printing press as an agent of continuity. Like all forms of writing, printing makes language stable and uniform and it therefore has a conservative as well as an innovative effect. The immediate consequence of the invention of European printing was to make medieval books

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The Giant Bible of Mainz or "Biblia latina" appears to have been produced in the same city and at about the same time (1452–53) that Johann Gutenberg was printing his great Bible. Bound in two volumes, the Giant Bible is written upon 459 white vellum leaves of the finest quality, which have been carefully ruled by the scribe. The illuminated borders found at the beginning of the first volume are the work of an exceptional artist who may have been the Master of the Playing Cards, the first copper engraver. This illumination from the beginning of the Book of Genesis contains two motifs, a wild man and a grazing deer, which also appear on the playing cards. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.
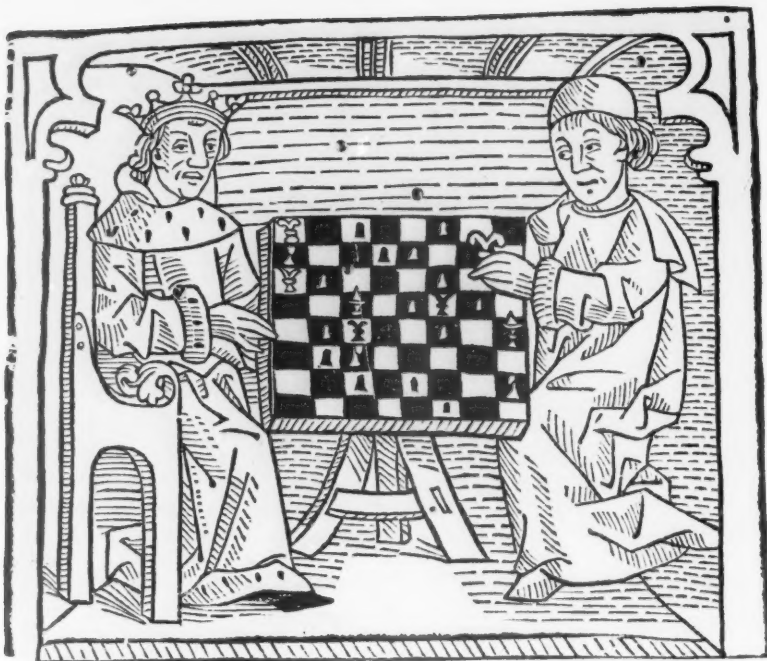
A woodcut from William Caxton's first illustrated edition of Jacobus de Cessolis's *De Ludo Scachorum* ("On the Game of Chess") (ca. 1482), one of sixteen books in the Rosenwald Collection from the press of England's first printer. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

more widely available. At least three-quarters of all books printed before 1500 were in Latin and most books printed in the next century were by medieval or ancient authors. Marshall McLuhan's epigram, "the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw more of the Middle Ages than had ever been available to anybody in the Middle Ages," needs stressing.

Instead of viewing printing as the starting point of a new age, let us look at it as the endpoint or culmination of a millennium. Writing was of extraordinary importance in medieval culture; otherwise printing would not have been invented. It was not printing as such

which was invented in Europe anyway, but a particular form of it which was capable of reproducing alphabetic script to a standard of quality sufficient to compete with medieval manuscripts. The main elements of European printing, including movable cast metal type, already had precedents in China and Korea. Although it is possible that the European inventors had heard about Chinese printing and may even have seen examples of it, they had to start afresh in order to devise a system for alphabetic script and the demanding forms it took in medieval books. The question of why European printing was invented in the 1450s can be answered in terms of technology, with particular emphasis being given to the refinement of skills in metal engraving and die-casting; the age of the printing press was also the age of guns, steel armor, and clockworks. Nevertheless, what is most remarkable about European printing, compared with Chinese, is not its technology, which was similar in essentials, but the speed with which it developed into a commercial business across Western Europe. Such speed suggests that a literate public demanding more books already existed, and also

that literate entrepreneurs and craftsmen were capable of appreciating the range of this market—sometimes by costly trial and error—and producing reading material for it.

The immediate success of European printing may imply that by the middle of the fifteenth century medieval Europe had achieved a more vigorous and widely disseminated literate culture than any previous civilization in the world including China. The elements of that literate culture are the subject of this article. Historians of literacy have tended to concentrate on its extension to the masses and its measurement by minimal but uniform tests (particularly the ability to sign one's name) in the last two or three centuries. The great strength of such research is that it is quantifiable. Nevertheless, it is as important to explain how literacy established itself and became sufficiently vigorous to sustain the mass production of printing. In the words of C. Ginzburg: "The quantitative and anti-anthropocentric approach of the sciences of nature from Galileo onwards has placed human sciences in an unpleasant dilemma; they must either adopt a weak scientific standard so as to be able to attain significant results, or adopt a strong scientific standard to attain results of no great importance." Historians of literacy before the seventeenth century must adopt a weak scientific standard and not apologize for that. In suggesting that medieval Europe had a vigorous literate culture I do not wish it to be assumed that Europe was automatically superior to less literate societies, but only that it was different. Literacy is not an abstract good but a technology of language. Nevertheless, the coincidence of printing succeeding in the period when Europeans first began to "discover" and dominate the world has often been noticed and may in some way not yet understood relate to the force of medieval literate culture. Prince Henry the Navigator and Columbus drew inspiration and knowledge from deep scholastic sources.

In order to show how printing grew out of the medieval environment, I will concentrate on what Gutenberg of Mainz, the inventor of European printing, aimed to achieve. This is a contentious subject, however, because the invention of printing is not well documented. Its pioneers were not the academics and authors who were to benefit from it, but technologists and business-

This is one of forty-five miniatures which embellish the Flemish manuscript "Horae Beatae Mariae" and which are ascribed to the "Gebetbuchmeister." This book of hours was executed on vellum in Ghent or Bruges during the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

men for whom it was an industrial venture. Gutenberg was a goldsmith and his partner, Johann Fust, was a lawyer. The first dated printed book, the psalter of 1457, bears the names of Fust and of Peter Schoeffer, who was the type designer. Such men, like the largely anonymous craftsmen who built the medieval cathedrals, tended to be secretive and practical. They were not accustomed to exposing their thoughts for posterity in the way monks and academics did. Consequently the earliest evidence about printing, as about so many medieval

developments, can only be gleaned from the formal records of lawsuits. Gutenberg's colleagues were disappointed with him and sued him for failing to produce the goods. How had he disappointed them? The most attractive hypothesis is that Gutenberg was a perfectionist, who intended to produce a perfect book, whereas his colleagues demanded a more immediate return on their investment.

The problem Gutenberg faced was to produce something as good as even the average medieval book. Even though some block books were produced earlier than Gutenberg's invention, they were far inferior in appearance to books written by scribes and were therefore not a solution to his problems. Gutenberg could not hope to surpass the best medieval books, for no books have ever surpassed in quality of production such works as the Book of Kells, the Winchester Bible, and the Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry. Medieval manuscript books are among the greatest works of art in the world. Their texts are generally elegant and ordered, written with highly controlled regularity of penmanship, and they are embellished with colored inks to clarify the text for the reader and to please the eye. Very few, of course, are as fine as the lavish illuminated manuscripts mentioned above, which were made for princes, both religious and secular, but, conversely, really badly written manuscripts are even more unusual. (Incompetent work is a subject which has not yet attracted the systematic attention of students of medieval paleography and illumination.) The manuscript books of Gutenberg's time were not, therefore, primitive precursors of printed books. On the contrary, they presented an image of perfection, encapsulating a thousand years of experience. That fact is demonstrated in the Library of Congress by the manuscript Giant Bible of Mainz, which emanates from the same time and place as the earliest printing. Likewise, Gutenberg seems to have thought that his books must be as perfect as possible if he were to win a market for them.

The kind of market resistance Gutenberg may have feared is revealed in the criticism of printed books by Johannes Trithemius, abbot of Sponheim, in 1492, "If writing is put onto parchment it can last for a thousand years, but how long will printing something on paper last? At the most a paper book could last for two hundred years." In fact Trithemius was unduly pessimistic in refusing to accept the possibilities offered by Gutenberg, as the best printed books have survived the centuries. Furthermore, Trithemius himself used the printing press to disseminate his views, and he was in fact one of the pioneers of publishing. Nevertheless, the contrast noted by Trithemius between traditional manuscripts and printed books does illustrate a fundamental difference between medieval and modern attitudes toward technology. Medieval monks took a long view of time, because they lived under God's eternal providence and wrote their books as an act of worship and a sacred charge for posterity. Modern technology, on the other hand, of which printing was the forerunner, takes a very short view, because it responds to a mass demand in the present regardless of the consequences. In the passage cited above, Trithemius sees printing as an essentially superficial process (the words are superimposed on frail paper), whereas the medieval scribe incised the words into the parchment with his pen. The act of writing was often likened by monks to ploughing the fields. "The pages are ploughed by the divine letters and the seed of God's word is planted in the parchment, which ripens into crops of completed books (libri perfecti)." Medieval scribal culture demanded that printing, unlike other technologies, should start fully developed because printers too had to produce libri perfecti.

What has survived of early printing is partly a matter of chance and the chronology is imprecise. Even so, enough has now been established by scholars to make a pattern discernible. Of particular significance are the earliest works of all, because these indicate the types of medieval writing that Gutenberg and his associates thought could best be exploited by printing. Later printers profited from their experience, whereas they — like the Portuguese navigators who were their contemporaries — had to venture into uncharted seas. The records of these first voyages into the printing market are therefore peculiarly valuable. The works of the first two decades of printing (1450–70) have been conveniently listed by Margaret B. Stillwell. I will narrow the list even further and consider the thirty-nine pieces of print-

Brilliantly colored, this illustration is from one of the great monuments of block book printing, *Apocalypsis Sancti Johannis* ("The Revelation of St. John"), an extremely popular text in the fifteenth century. There are five different editions known. The coloring in the Library's copy is uncommonly fresh, as if it had never been exposed to the light. The facing blanks on the reverse of the plates are often pasted together, but on some of the blank versos in this copy a fifteenth-century hand has added part of the text of the Apocalypse with commentary. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

ing which are ascribed to the first decade ending in 1460. When analyzed by function, these pieces fall into three main categories, with a fourth category on the periphery.

Sacred Literacy. In pride of place stand the Latin Bibles and prayer books (eleven items), which include the largest and most magnificent works: the 42-line Bible (the first printed book), the psalter of 1457 (the first dated printed book), and the 36-line Bible. I would describe the common factor of function in these works as Sacred Literacy: these were the principal texts in the church's liturgy, having the books of the Latin vulgate Bible (the translation of St. Jerome done in the late fourth century) as their foundation.

Learned Literacy. In the second category I place Aelius Donatus's basic Latin grammar, which (like the vulgate Bible) had been in use since the late fourth century. In this category, likewise, I place four scholastic works (three of them dating from the thirteenth century, including a piece by Aquinas) and one medical calendar. These twelve items I would describe as providing for Learned Literacy: the tradition of Latin learning which had taken shape in the late Roman Empire and developed through the twelfth-century Renaissance into the *summae* of the schoolmen. As Latin teachers never wearied of repeating, grammar was the basis of all this learning and it is therefore appropriate that Donatus should have been printed so frequently at the beginning.

Bureaucratic Literacy. In the third category I place four indulgence certificates issued in the name of Pope Nicholas V (1447–55) for the crusade, two papal bulls (one translated into German) likewise concerning the crusade, and five pieces (mainly papal bulls) concerning canon law. These eleven items are products of the development of papal authority since the twelfth century. This was characterized by the issue of thousands, and by the fourteenth century of hundreds of thousands, of papal letters or *decreta* which formed the basis of canon law. Printing was well suited to the proliferation of such documents as indulgence certificates, as they were a common form on which blanks could be left for the date and the beneficiary's name. (The earliest dated printing from England by Caxton is an indulgence certificate from 1476.) This use of printing I would describe as catering to practical or Bureaucratic Literacy. This was concerned not with books as such but with documents, and it had its medieval origins not in the fourth century but in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century growth of bureaucracy all across Western Europe.

Vernacular Literacy. Finally, five of the thirty-nine earliest pieces of printing are directed exclusively at German readers instead of Latin. Two of these have death and the Last Judgment as their subject, and the other three are likewise concerned with prognostication as they are forms of calendars. I would describe the common factor in these pieces as Vernacular Literacy: works which appealed to a wider public than the elite Latin readers. The long-term future of education lay of course with the vernacular languages. Nevertheless, judging by early printing, their place was still peripheral. Vernacular works appealed to a relatively wide public within a particular region, but against this had to be set the fact that they were restricted to a particular language area. Latin, on the other hand, provided an international market and it still retained unique prestige. As the language of literacy for a millennium and more, it had proved to be the hardiest of perennials. To be literate ideally meant to be learned in Latin in the fifteenth century, as much as in the fifth or in the days of Cicero.

As has often been pointed out, neither in their appearance nor in their content do these earliest pieces of printing differ from manuscripts. The printers strove to imitate manuscripts as closely as possible. This presented the first type designers with unusual problems, as they had to provide type for numerous letter forms and for the abbreviations used by medieval scribes. The first "sacred" books were printed in various fonts of Gothic type (the formal book hand of manuscripts), whereas such "bureaucratic" documents as indulgence certificates imitated the cursive hands of chanceries. Whether manuscript or print, each script had to appear in its appropriate form in order to be valid. Gutenberg would not have dreamed of altering the "sacred page" of scripture, or the traditional transmission of literacy in imprints of Donatus; still less would it have been wise to tamper with the routines of papal bureaucracy. The most challenging problem was to reproduce in print the

꿱 Cy commence le liure de valerius
maximus/translate de latin en fran
cois par religieuse psonne maistre
simon de besdin maistre en theolo
gie/et frē de saint iehan de ihr'l'm/

A briefte et fra
gilite de ceste
doloreuse vie li
constance et va
riaablete de for
tūe la mutatōn
aussi de la voulente/τ de la pensee hu
maine/sont les causes pour quop ie
nay pomt fait a ce commencemit le pro
logue de ce liure/Car ie peuisse bien
auoir promis ou auoir eu en voulē
te de telle chose faire/qui moult tost
et legieremit peuist auoir este empes
chee pour aucune des causes deuant
dictes/toutesfoies par maniē dun
petit pheme/il me faule faire aucu
nes declarations necessaires /pour

l'entendemit de ce liure/qui est moult
fort a bien entendre/aumoins selō
ce quil semble a mon petit entēdemit
Premieremēt dont est assauoir que
en ce liure ainsi que en tous autres
liures et autres choses naturelles et
artificiaires/y a quatre causes princi
pales/Cest assauoir cause matericle
cause formele/ cause finale /et cause
efficiēt La cause matericle de ce liure
est les fais/et les diz des rommains/
et des autres gens / que valerius
appelle estrangesset generalement
vices/ou virtus/ ou aucunes de leurs
circōstāces La cause formele est dou
ble/car il y a forme de traichier / τ for
me de traichie La forme de traichier
est le bel et noble stille de la matiere
de son pler La forme de traichie est
la diuision du liure / en pluiseurs li
ures/ τ en pluiseurs chappitres La
cause finale de ce liure est/introduire
toutes gens/a ensieuir les virtus et

This is one of seven pages which distinguish the Library's copy of Valerius Maximus's *Facta et dicta memorabilia* by their watercolor illustrations, hand-painted floral borders, and illuminated initials. It was probably printed in one of the southern provinces of Belgium, which at the time was a part of northern France. It is one of the three earliest books printed in the French language and may possibly be the first. There is no indication of place or date of printing, but we know from a contemporary handwritten ownership note that it cannot have been printed after 1477. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

variety of color in medieval manuscripts. As has already been suggested, Gutenberg seems to have been determined to do this, whereas his colleagues, Fust and Schoeffer, were satisfied with a little less. In the first printed book, the 42-line Bible, the rubrication and border illumination was done by hand. Yet even Fust and Schoeffer were perfectionists by later standards, as the psalter they produced in 1457 was printed in three colors (black, red, and blue) and it even has printed calligraphic ornaments. What it lacks, which Gutenberg perhaps aspired to, are printed colored images in the margins. Gutenberg succeeded in automating the scribe, but not the illuminator.

By looking back from the earliest evidence of printing we discern across the medieval centuries those elements in the development of writing which made the printed book possible. The most fundamental creation of all was the book itself. In the ancient world the scroll was the usual format for writing. The book or codex format, comprising pages which are turned over, was known to the Romans but its use was uncommon and secondary to scrolls. The early Christians seem to have positively favored the book format, because it distinguished their scriptures from those of the Jews and pagans. They were also the first to develop the abbreviations so characteristic of medieval and early printed texts. Christianity, likewise, seems to have been responsible for the changeover from papyrus to parchment as the commonest manuscript material. This change cannot be explained in utilitarian terms, since papyrus is in fact as resilient as parchment. However, like the scroll format, papyrus may have been too closely associated in the minds of early Christians with the pagan lore of antiquity which they were determined to supersede. Christianity can thus be said to have invented the parchment book, whose official baptism is marked in 332 by the Emperor Constantine's order for vellum Bibles in the principal churches.

By the seventh century, Christian manuscripts were distinguished from all others not only by the book format but by being illuminated. Although some writings from the pagan Mediterranean world have colored illustrations, these are different in character from medieval illuminated manuscripts. The difference is that in medieval manuscripts individual letters, as distinct from pages or subjects, are embellished with precious paints and often with images as well; these are not illustrations but illuminations. The effect of illumination was to make books both awesome and attractive. The modern utilitarian reader will say that such illumination is unnecessary and, indeed, inappropriate in printed books, but that is wisdom after the event. The monks of the seventh century who pioneered illumination in such sublime works as the Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels evidently thought it essential. They were writing the *sacra pagina*, the "sacred page" of the scripture, in the execution of which no trouble or expense could be too great. Trithemius still echoed this idea eight centuries later: "holy scripture is most worthy of every adornment." Unlike hireling scriveners and the slave writers of the ancient world, monastic scribes were the Lord's shepherds who enfolded the divine words in the interlace of their designs. Their work fills the modern viewer with wonder at its craftsmanship and that is the right reaction, because illumination was intended to be wonder-working. The earliest Irish manuscript with decorated letters, the *Cathach* (the "Battler") of St. Columba (dating from about 600), was so called because it was carried in battle as a talisman. The Lindisfarne Gospels and other great liturgical books were similarly treated as holy relics.

Monastic illumination of manuscripts gave to writings a force and prestige which was unprecedented. Througout the millennium of Western monasticism (500–1500) the rich founded monasteries so that monks might pray and worship on their behalf. The monks displayed the fruit of their labors to their patrons in their churches and other works of art, particularly in their books. When, with growing prosperity, from about 1250 onward the demand for individual prayer reached down to the middle class of knights and burgesses, they began to want pocket-sized Bibles and wonder-working books of their own. They could not afford to buy a chantry chapel or a jeweled reliquary, but a small illuminated manuscript came within their means as the first step toward the purchase of paradise. Ladies in particular took to reciting the

Latin psalter and treasuring illuminated books of hours. In fifteenth-century depictions of the Annunciation, Mary is often shown seated in a sunlit bower with an open book of hours on her lap or displayed on a lectern. Likewise she is sometimes depicted with the child Jesus on her knee, showing him a book of hours. The habit of possessing books might never have reached the laity if writing had not been made so luxurious and so covetable. Illumination introduced the laity to script through images which could not fail to attract the eye. "If it can be done," wrote Trithemius, "books should be adorned with beautiful decoration so that even by their appearance they provoke the reader to look at them." The children of the prosperous were introduced to the psalter by their mothers or a priest both for the purpose of learning to read and of beginning formal prayer. To own a psalter was therefore an act of familial as well as of public piety. Fust and Schoeffer's psalter of 1457 and the Gutenberg Bibles made the treasures of a millennium of monastic culture available to buyers. This was the first market for printing.

Perhaps only a minority of these new lay book owners read the psalter with full understanding, but that has been true of owners of books at any time. Moreover, understanding a book meant something different to the medieval reader than it does to us. Monastic reading, *lectio divina,* was not a utilitarian procedure. In the Rule of St. Benedict, each monk was given one book to study for a year. This gave him time to digest it by metaphorically chewing over its meaning. St. Anselm's *Meditation on Human Redemption* (composed in the 1090s) describes the process: "Taste the goodness of your redeemer . . . chew the honeycomb of his words, suck their flavor which is sweeter than honey, swallow their wholesome sweetness; chew by thinking, suck by understanding, swallow by loving and rejoicing." The process of rumination was assisted by the brilliant colors of the illuminations. "The ink with which we write is humility itself," wrote a monk of Durham in the twelfth century, while "the diverse colors wherewith the book is illuminated not unworthily represent the grace of heavenly wisdom." This wisdom was the gift of the Holy Spirit, shining through fallible men. Illuminations in books had the same sort of effect as the stained

This handsomely bordered color miniature and the ones that follow are from the Library's *Coustumes de Normandie,* an unusual and appealing manuscript copy of the *Grand Coutumier de Normandie.* Stylistic evidence suggests that the manuscript not only was designed for use in Normandy but might well have been produced in that region during the third quarter of the fifteenth century. *Coustumes* are French local customary laws. Coutume Collection, Law Library.
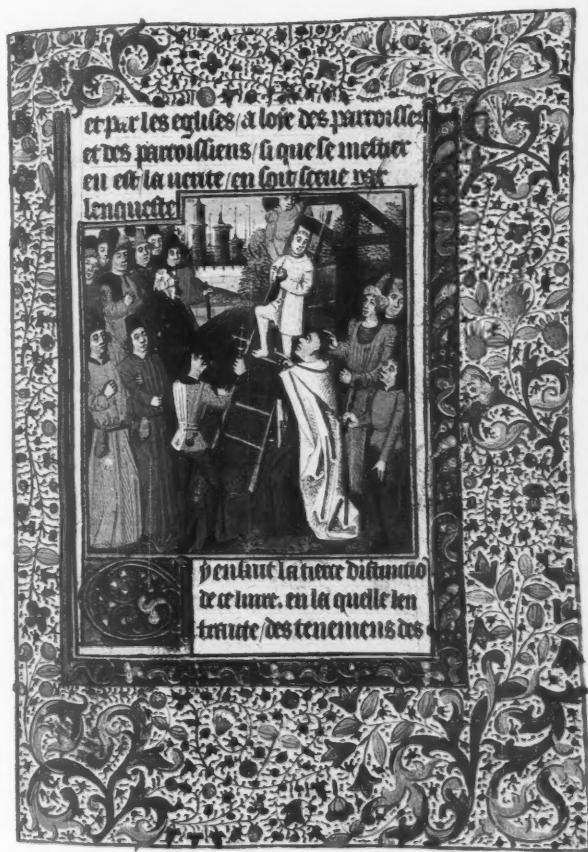
An execution by hanging. This miniature is an example of the adaptation of a religious composition to a secular illustration. It very closely parallels the traditional arrangement of the Descent from the Cross.

glass and jewels of the great churches. They helped the worshipper through the refraction of color and light to absorb the meaning of the work into his inner being.

> Marvel not at the gold nor the expense,
> but at the craftsmanship of the work.
> Bright is the noble work,
> but work which is nobly bright brightens minds,
> so that they go through true lights to the True Light
>
> (translated from the Latin)

This verse of Abbot Suger, in praise of his gilded doors at St. Denis in 1140, applies equally well to the way illuminated books were intended to shine through to the truth. Beyond *legere* ("reading") was *intellegere* ("understanding"). Mastering the literal meaning of a text was merely the first step before proceeding to its higher meanings: allegorical (intimating eternal truths); tropological (prescribing moral duties); anagogical (anticipating future happenings or mystical truths). Only then did the scripture make full sense. St. Paul's words, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," were the basis of the medieval approach to scripture and hence to other forms of reading. Perhaps this is why the earliest printing was made to look like an illuminated manuscript, "written" (in St. Paul's words) "not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," whereas the truth was that the bed of metal type from which a printed text was produced was as insensible as a "table of stone."

Although works of Sacred Literacy stand in pride of place in the earliest printing, other pieces were produced which I have categorized as providing for Learned Literacy, Bureaucratic Literacy, and Vernacular Literacy. These forms do not require as full an exposition, as they are more familiar to the modern reader. Nevertheless, here also medieval forms differed from ours and contributed to the growth of literacy in surprising ways. Let us consider Learned Literacy first of all. As we have seen, this was represented most frequently in the earliest printing by Donatus's Latin grammar, which had been in continuous use for more than a millennium. Medieval attitudes toward classical

Latin were ambivalent. No less an authority than Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) despised grammar because "I think it entirely unworthy to confine the words of celestial revelation within the rules of Donatus." But it was an inescapable fact that the words of the scripture were confined within these rules because Donatus taught St. Jerome, who produced the Latin vulgate Bible. Latin style was first absorbed by reading the Bible, starting in early childhood with the psalter, and then developed formally through grammar and the study of classical authors— particularly Virgil, Cicero, and Ovid. Through teaching and copying texts, the monasteries became not only the guardians but the promoters of pagan classical learning. The school and library of Monte Cassino, the mother house of Benedictine monasticism, best demonstrate this continuity of the classical tradition in the early Middle Ages.

There was, of course, some decline between the sixth and twelfth centuries in both the quality and the quantity of Latin writing. Nevertheless, this had the paradoxical effect of giving literates peculiar prestige. *Litteratus* in medieval usage meant being learned in Latin rather than having a rudimentary ability to read and write. But Latin learning was also directly associated with the church. As a consequence, the elite of the church, the *clerici*, became identified with the learned elite, the *litterati*. By the twelfth century, the terms *clericus* and *litteratus* were synonymous. The *clerici* had important privileges which the *litterati* consequently shared. In later medieval England the most conspicuous of such privileges was benefit of clergy, whereby a person found guilty of a serious crime was exempted from the death penalty if he could prove that he was *litteratus*. The test usually consisted of reading a passage from the psalter which (as we have seen) was the starting point of both biblical and Latin study as well as—most appropriately —the first book to bear a printer's name and date. At the very time that printing was invented in Germany, English records demonstrate that prisoners of "every variety of occupation," including laborers, were proving their "clergy" status by a reading test. Such a test was obviously a diminution of the earlier ideal of a *litteratus* being a person of eminent learning and status. Thus, for example, English records

show that of a sample of 116 male witnesses in London between 1467 and 1476, 62 (that is, more than half) are described as *litteratus* and six as *aliqualiter litteratus* ("quite literate"). These *litterati* are primarily tradesmen and superior artisans: fishmongers, grocers, haberdashers, barbers, tailors, joiners, and so on. *Litteratus* in this context evidently has something like its modern meaning of "competent in the rudiments" rather than "learned" in the old tradition. The identification of the *litteratus* exclusively with the *clericus* consequently ceased. *Es tu clericus*? ("Are you a cleric?"), a fifteenth-century dialogue for teaching Latin composition poses this question to a pupil and the answer comes back: *Non sum clericus sed sum aliqualiter litteratus* ("I am not a cleric but I am quite literate"). In this negative form the sufficiently instructed layman announces his appearance on the scene.

It is not my purpose to assess from the meager statistics available what proportion of the population of England or of other regions of Europe was literate (in whatever sense) at the time printing was invented. Statistics from medieval sources can do no more than indicate trends. Nevertheless, the need to adopt a "weak scientific standard" regarding numbers does not exempt medieval historians from applying scholarly rigor to their generalizations. An example of how not to proceed is provided in a recent history of the later medieval church. The author, J. C. Dickinson, asks, "what proportion of the English population was literate?" and replies that "we have absolutely no useful statistics to show us the answer." Despite claiming that there are no useful statistics (which is an exaggeration), the author insists the following: "That on the eve of the Reformation the very great majority of the English population was still illiterate there can be no doubt, this being especially marked in the fair sex." The work of J. H. Moran, on the other hand, "suggests that the older picture of a paucity of educational resources and literate interests needs correction. Nor can one any longer point exclusively to the sixteenth century as the age of educational revolution; it is now increasingly obvious that a long history of development preceded the Reformation." As part of that long history I wish only to emphasize in the present context how
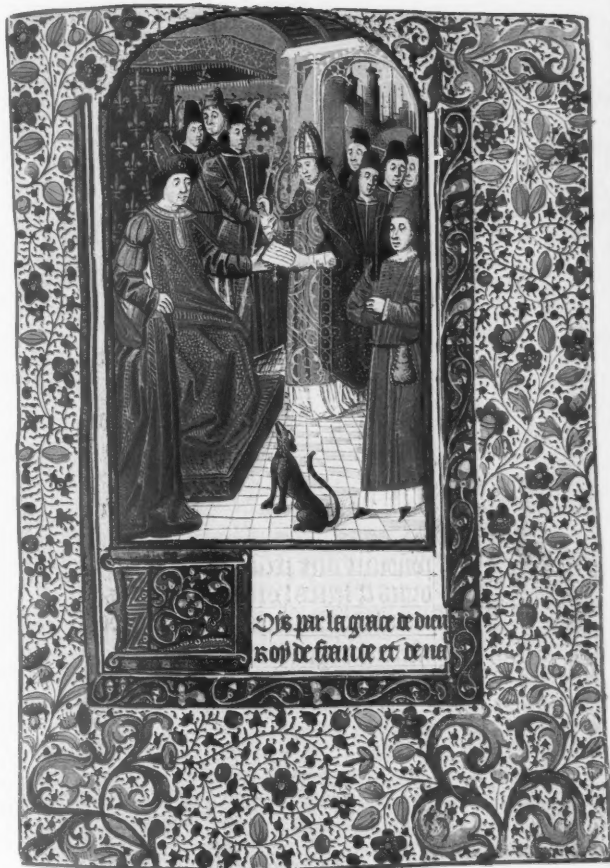
A king of France presenting a document to an archbishop. This miniature is probably a symbolic representation of the kings of France giving *coutumiers* or *chartes* to the archbishops of Normandy.

clerical privilege promoted the growth of literacy among the laity. Probably more important than the negative aspect of avoiding the death penalty were the positive privileges of the clergy, particularly their endowments which, by the fifteenth century, comprised one-quarter or one-third of all wealth. Clergy were needed at every level of society, from princely bishops and abbots down to poor priests in the villages. As the clergy were supposed to be celibate, new members had to be recruited constantly from the laity, and as they were supposed to be learned, some knowledge of Latin was the criterion for entry. In this way some Latin, and hence some literacy in the medieval sense, made its way across and down the social classes. Educators are now becoming aware that people need strong inducements to be literate. Medieval society offered its *litterati* greater privileges, perhaps, than any previous civilization. Certainly, only medieval society made the ability to read a matter of life and death.

Another of the earliest uses of printing was for what I call Bureaucratic Literacy, in the first instance for papal indulgence certificates. Bureaucracy was as powerful a promoter of literacy and respect for writing as either Sacred Literacy or Learned Literacy. It had begun to increase markedly in the twelfth century, when secular governments followed the lead of the popes in developing chanceries and employing clerks on a regular basis. Kings began to pester their subjects with written demands, particularly for taxes, until writing penetrated into the villages. "Thou are writen y my writ that thou wel wost" (You are written in my list as you know very well) the English *Song of the Husbandman* (dating from the first decades of the fourteenth century) has the village beadle say to a peasant. Unlike the other forms of literacy, moreover, the growth of bureaucracy encouraged writing as much as reading, because numerous clerks were needed to write the letters and reply to them. The medieval universities grew out of this need for clerks. The earliest ones (Bologna, Paris, and Salerno) were distinguished from the monastic schools by providing a practical education in law, theology, and medicine. University masters claimed that these new subjects were superior to the classical curriculum of the Seven Liberal Arts and out of this grew the controversy of the *moderni* (the university masters and bureaucrats) and the *antiqui* (the monks and grammarians). The idea of being "modern" is itself medieval. The best example of a "modern" curriculum is the *ars dictaminis,* the art of dictation or letter writing, which was taught in law schools. The graduates of these courses became the notaries and secretaries who were indispensable to bureaucratic administration.

In being summarized and generalized from my published work, the preceding paragraph gives too simplistic an impression. Literacy for practical purposes is hard to study because daily and familiar routines are rarely described. Therefore, to counterbalance these generalizations, I will give three examples from England of Bureaucratic Literacy in the century before printing. The first comes from Kent in 1381. On the gatehouse of Cooling Castle is affixed a large brass plate in the form of a charter or letters patent, complete with a pendant seal on cords (all done in brass) bearing the arms of the builder, Sir John Cobham. The text (presented here in modernized English) consists of a little verse:

> Knoweth all that be and shall be
> That I am made to help the country,
> In acknowledging which thing
> This is charter and witnessing.

Sir John was deeply involved in the war with France. Although an extensive readership cannot automatically be inferred from the existence of an inscription, this one addressed to all English patriots was presumably intended to have wide appeal. Furthermore, it assumes that its readers are familiar enough with the form of a charter to appreciate the point of producing one writ large in brass to bear witness to the making of a castle instead of a business transaction. My second example comes from Nottingham in 1413. Various burgesses had been indicted by a grand jury of intimidation at the mayor's election. The record notes in passing that one of them, Ralph Botiller, "wrote down the names of the jurors on his tablets as they were called out one after another in order to tell his fellows who their indictors were, but the justices took the tablets so written away from him." The use of writing tablets went back to the ancient world; they were normally made of flat pieces of wood, upon

which a wax surface was laid and written on with a stylus. Unlike pen and ink, they could be carried conveniently on a belt and were therefore ideal for taking notes. Although it was probably commonplace for a fifteenth-century burgess to have writing tablets, as he would use them in the management of his business, the fact that Ralph Botiller possessed them is known only because they were confiscated by the king's justices. Unlike the parchment which formally recorded this confiscation, Ralph's list of the jurors' names on wax was ephemeral both in purpose and in the material used. The humbler the writer the humbler was his writing material and the less likely it was to survive.

My third example of Bureaucratic Literacy also concerns the frequency of taking notes. It comes from that great monument to the literacy of the gentry, the Paston letters. In 1459, Margaret Paston wrote to her husband, John, asking him to find another man to take charge of the buttery (the household provisions store) because "the man that ye left with me will not take upon him to breve daily as ye commanded; he saith he hath not used to give a reckoning neither of bread nor ale till at the week's end." To *breve* means to commit to writing or to set on record. In other words, John Paston, who was a stickler for written evidence as other letters show, required his butler to keep a daily record whereas the normal practice was weekly. The demand for weekly records (let alone daily ones) implies that servants had to be somewhat literate, as well as their masters. That had been theoretically so in England since about 1300 when treatises on estate management assumed that stewards and bailiffs kept written records. Bureaucracy was not the exclusive preserve of the papal and royal chanceries. It was imitated by merchants and estate managers and soon reached the lady of the house and the buttery.

Sacred Literacy gave books peculiar prestige. Learned Literacy made literates into a privileged elite. Bureaucratic Literacy caused the diffusion of documents and of their writers throughout the towns, villages, and great houses of medieval Europe. The long-term future lay, however, with none of these in their Latin forms but with Vernacular Literacy. It is significant, for example, that Sir John Cobham erected his brass plate in English and the Pastons corresponded
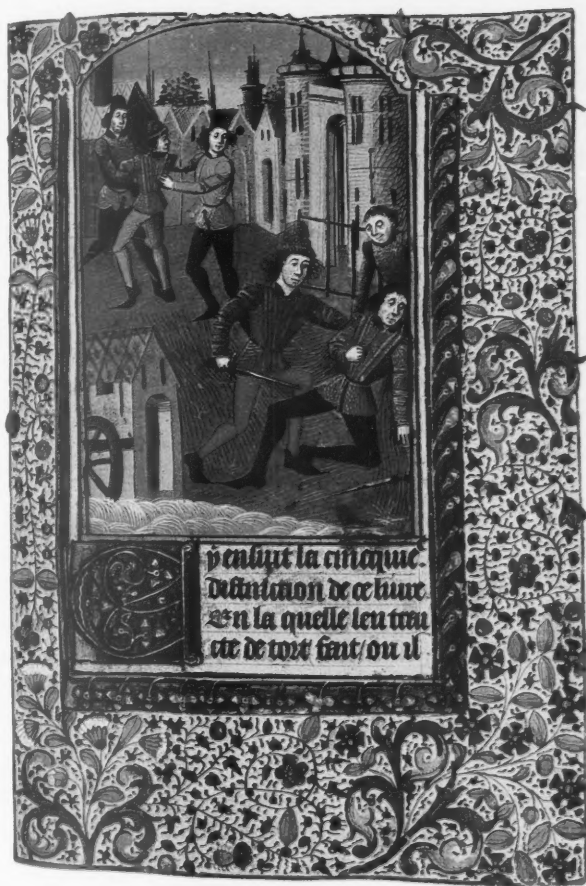
A judicial duel. When a plaintiff's accusations were denied by the defendant, the case often had to be settled by a duel. At noon on the appointed day, four *chevalliers* took the two *champions* to a *champ*. After an elaborate, prescribed ritual of prayers and oaths, the opponents fought.

in English, whereas inscriptions or letters of two or three centuries earlier were in Latin. Nevertheless, Vernacular Literacy was still striving to establish itself as the most accepted mode of written communication. Because printers before 1500 were cautious in their approach to the market, they deferred to the prestige of Latin and produced most of their large books from the traditional stock of church and university. To this rule there are exceptions, of which Caxton's printing of Chaucer and Malory and other works of English literature is the most prominent. Nevertheless, Caxton really proves the rule that Latin was the norm in the earliest printing, as he found a distinctive market of his own only by producing works in English which did not have to compete with imported books in Latin.

The four forms of literacy which I have identified in the earliest printing are a useful way of looking at the development of literacy, but they have the shortcoming of all historical generalizations of being oversimplified. There was no linear growth of literacy from Sacred to Learned to Bureaucratic and thence to Vernacular. The four forms were mutually opposed in theory and might have canceled each other out. Sacred writing should not have been used for secular purposes and its painstaking script (book hand) and illuminations were unsuitable for ordinary business. Many of the early charters written by monks are absurdly unprofessional documents, both in content and appearance, by later medieval notarial standards. Learning likewise was theoretically opposed to Sacred Literacy as it was associated with paganism. Monastic attitudes toward it were as ambivalent in the time of St. Bernard in the twelfth century as they had been in the time of Gregory the Great. Furthermore, although the division between *clerici* and *laici* did in fact cause an increasing proportion of the population to be initiated into the clerical way of literacy, that had not been the original intention. Laymen were in theory excluded from literacy because it was in Latin. Even if a knight learned to read Latin, it did not extend his own form of culture and education because that was in the oral tradition of a vernacular language. In the words of a

thirteenth-century English knight, Walter of Bibbesworth, *le levere nous aprent clergie* ("the book teaches us the way of the clergy"). Nor was Bureaucratic Literacy a simple or effortless development. Documents were distrusted for the good reason that many of them (particularly monastic charters) were forgeries and they did not at first contain information to verify them, such as the date and place of issue or the writer's name. It was a legal commonplace that oral witness deserved more credence than written evidence. W. J. Ong notes that "witnesses were alive and credible because they could defend their statements; writing was dead marks on a dead surface, unable to clarify itself if it proved unclear or to defend itself against objections."

Instead of asking in an impatient modern way, "why did literacy not develop faster in the Middle Ages?" we should be asking "why did it develop at all, considering the obstacles in its path?" In reply to the latter question I would suggest that although the various forms of medieval literacy pointed in different directions, they overlapped because practice was less self-contained than theory. Monks were often acquainted with pagan literature and the language of medieval scripture was unavoidably the language of Donatus. Monks too came to terms with bureaucracy and secular government: they recorded the charters of kings in cartularies and their worldly deeds in chronicles. Harder to understand is why monks and clerics wrote down vernacular epics like *Beowulf* and the *Chanson de Roland*, but these too had a Christian message. Similarly, the schoolmen, who specialized in Learned Literacy, had close associations with both the Sacred and the Bureaucratic forms. The purpose of the new higher learning, most obviously in theology and canon law, was to expound the authority of the Bible and the church. At the same time this was a practical endeavor, brought down to the level of daily business by the *ars dictaminis* and the basic method of canon law which depended upon the interpretation of decretal letters. The most exalted of the schoolmen became saints of the church, while the majority became clerks in chanceries and the wandering scholars of the taverns. These humble literates disseminated their skills and made them attractive. From the storytellers and minstrels, grounded in the schools, came the great vernacu-

lar writers: Chrétien de Troyes, Gottfried von Strasburg, Boccaccio, and Chaucer. The greatest of them all, Dante, was steeped in the learning of the schools.

Thus, in numerous ways the various forms of literacy reinforced each other, despite being mutually opposed in theory. As a consequence, almost all medieval writings took on some of the dignity and awe of sacred books. The most secular of documents, William the Conqueror's *Domesdei* (Doomsday) *Book*, looks not unlike a prayer book (indeed later copies of it were elaborately illuminated) and, as its name implies, it was likened by the conquered English to the Book of Revelation and the last judgment. Similarly, the schoolmen, the *clerici* and *litterati*, retained their privileges despite becoming more numerous and they glossed the books of secular Roman law in the same way as they glossed the Bible. Writs and charters too were portentous documents, which adopted their conventions of style and script from sacred and scholastic works. They needed to be portentous if they were to impress the semiliterate. For example, the indulgence certificates printed by Gutenberg's press had to look like assurances of salvation and not simple receipts.

Printing thus emerged not from a vacuum, but from a rich and complex culture which accorded extraordinary prestige to the written word. In the earliest printed works Gutenberg and his associates, out of commercial necessity, identified the chief features of medieval literate culture and aimed to reproduce them as exactly as possible. In doing so they acknowledged the achievements of a millennium of writing.


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A visit to a sickroom. This miniature probably portrays the procedure followed when a defendant is too ill to appear in court. Among other steps, a bailiff, accompanied by four knights or eight honest men above suspicion, must visit the sick person to verify his illness.

Reasons for Poetry

BY WILLIAM MEREDITH
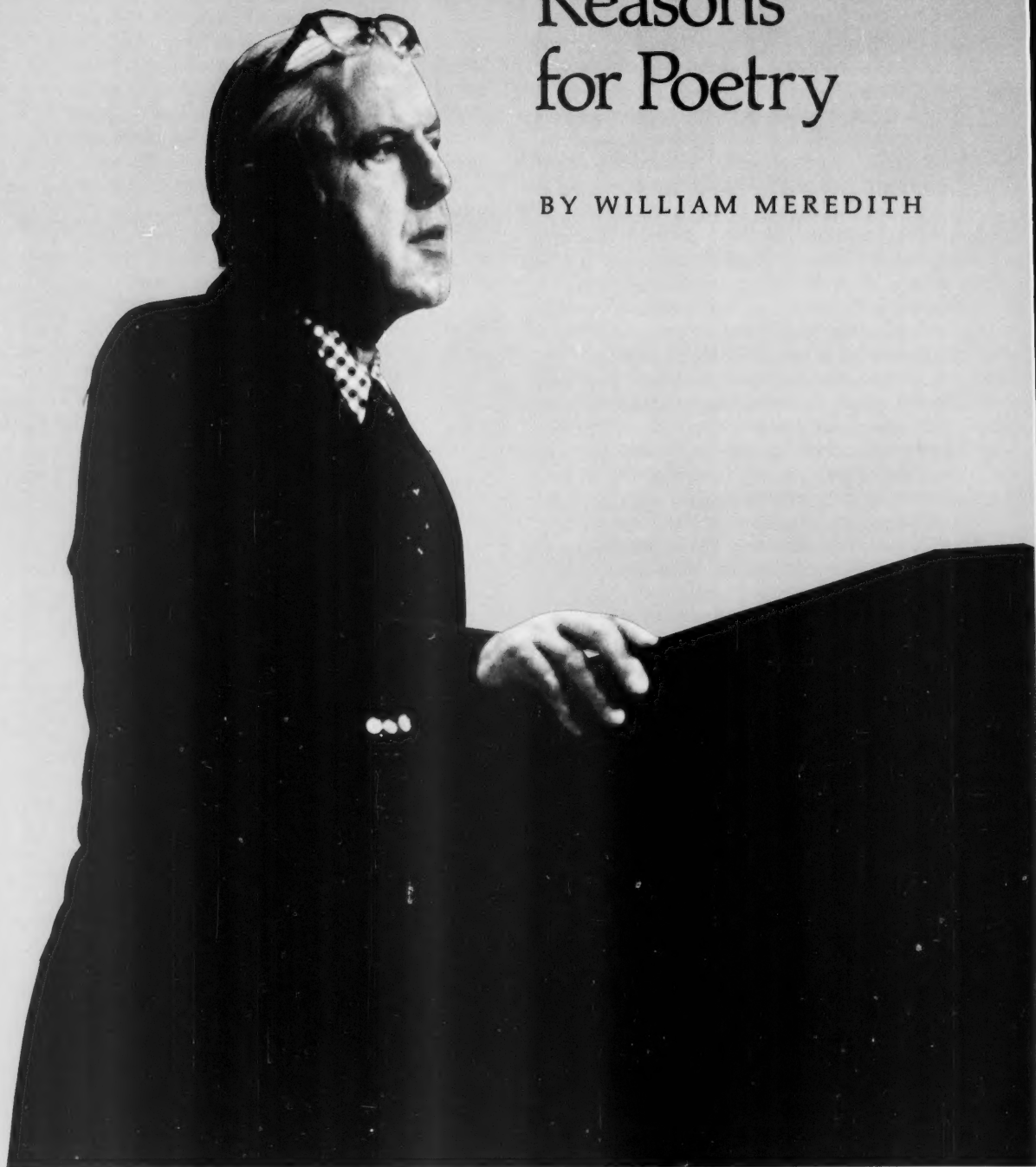
Jon Wallen

The Mexican poet José Emilio Pacheco, in a poem called "Dissertation on Poetic Propriety," asks for a "a new definition . . . a name, some term or other . . . to avoid the astonishment and rages of those who say, so reasonably, looking at a poem: 'Now this is not poetry.' " I too want to argue for a broader definition which will increase our sense of the multitudes that poetry contains. For in this time of widely diverging definitions, those of us who care about poetry are apt to be consciously limited in our tastes, and churlish in our distastes. We often have more precise ideas, based on these distastes, about what poetry is not than about what it is.

If I cannot come up with the new definition Pacheco asks for, what I say is at least intended to turn aside the easy negative response in myself and in others to poems which are not immediately congenial. For whenever we say, "Now this is not poetry," we are adding to the disuse of all poetry.

Perhaps the most useful definition, in fact, would begin with a statement about expectation: the expectation with which a reader engages a poem, and the reasons for which a poet may have undertaken the poem, and the possible discrepancy between these two. We have all had the experience of fighting a work of art because it was not doing what we were asking of it. John Ashbery said in an interview: "My feeling is

that a poem that communicates something that's already known to the reader is not really communicating anything to him and in fact shows a lack of respect for him." Since what is communicated in a work of art is also *how* it is communicated, a false expectation is almost certain to produce a false reading. And often we confirm this by the happy surprise that comes when a work we had been defeated by suddenly opens itself to us—we find that it performs very well the job of work which was its reason, once we stop asking it to perform some other service which was no part of its intention.

A word here about *liking* a poem. This should of course be our primary objective and motive. But to like is a function of the critical intelligence, as this passage by W. H. Auden makes clear:

> As readers, we remain in the nursery stage as long as we cannot distinguish between taste and judgment, so long, that is, as the only possible verdicts we can pass on a book are two: this I like, this I don't like.

He goes on with the lovely, schoolmasterly, and abashing accuracy of an Audenism:

> For an adult reader, the possible verdicts are five: I can see this is good and I like it; I can see this is good but I don't like it; I can see this is good and, though at present I don't like it, I believe that with perseverance I shall come to like it; I can see this is trash but I like it; I can see this is trash and I don't like it.

My argument is that we should use the third option as often as possible, when the first response is not spontaneous with us. When we can't say of a poem, especially of a poem that comes recommended, I can see this is good and I like it, we owe it to ourselves and the poem to try to say, I can see this is good, and though at present I don't like it, I believe that with perseverance, et cetera.

Poems seem to come into being for various and distinct reasons. These vary from poem to poem and from poet to poet. The reason for a poem is apt to be one of the revelations attendant on its making. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader, Frost said. The reason for a new poem is, in some essential, a new reason. This is why poets, in the large Greek sense of *makers,* are crucial to a culture. They respond newly, but in the familiar tribal experience of language, to what new thing befalls the tribe. I shall have some comments to make here about three generic reasons for which poems seem to come into being, but even within these genera, the occasion of a poem is always a new thing under the sun.

And poets don't respond as one, they respond in character, with various intuition, to the new experience. What each maker makes is poetry, but why he makes it, his reason, is his unique intuition. The reason determines the proper mode of apprehension. It is part of the purpose of every poem to surprise us with our own capacity for change, for a totally new response. For example, David Wagoner's lines called aggressively, "This is a Wonderful Poem":

Come at it carefully, don't trust it, that isn't its
    right name,
It's wearing stolen rags, it's never been washed,
    its breath
Would look moss-green if it were really breathing,
It won't get out of the way, it stares at you
Out of eyes burnt gray as the sidewalk,
Its skin is overcast with colorless dirt,
It has no distinguishing marks, no I.D. cards,
It wants something of yours but hasn't decided
Whether to ask for it or just take it,
There are no policemen, no friendly neighbors,
No peacekeeping busybodies to yell for, only this
Thing standing between you and the place you
    were headed,
You have about thirty seconds to get past it,
    around it,
Or simply to back away and try to forget it,
It won't take no for an answer: try hitting it first
And you'll learn what's trembling in its
    torn pocket.
Now, what do you want to do about it?

From *Collected Poems 1956–1976* by David Wagoner. © 1976 by Indiana University Press. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

The resilience such a poem asks of us is a reader's first responsibility. To assume one knows what a poem is going to do is (to turn John Ashbery's statement around) to show a lack of respect for it. I think it is chiefly a lack of resilience that has kept the poetry public so small in our country, and has divided what public there is into dozens of hostile sects. We say of our own chosen poetry—Olsen or Frost, Lowell or Bly—the poetry whose reasons strike us as reasonable, "Now this is poetry," and then generally, of everything else, loudly, airily and with great conviction, "and this is not." Criticism, which is at its most perceptive when most appreciative, is thus often *narrowly* appreciative. It divides and rules and does little to promulgate the astonishment, the larger force of poetry.

And it is very easy to reject poems whose reasons do not declare or recommend themselves to us. Take an extreme mode of recent poetry which Robert Pinsky has described in *The Situation of Modern Poetry.* This school, he says, has "a prevalent diction or manner" which embodies, "in language, a host of reservations about language, human reason, and their holds on life." He quotes a poem by W. S. Merwin and says of it: "It moves in a resolutely elliptical way from image to atomistic image, finally reaching a kind of generalization-against generalizing in the line:

Today belongs to few and tomorrow to
    no one.

Pinsky concludes: "This poem presents a style well suited to a certain deeply skeptical or limiting vision of the poetic imagination and its place in the world."

To appreciate a poem conceived in these terms —conceived for what many readers would consider nonreasons—is not easy for most of us. What kind of poem harbors "a host of reservations about language, human reason, and their holds on life," and "with a deeply skeptical or limiting vision of the poetic imagination and its place in the world?" *Aha!* says the part of our mind that waits with a club for *what is not a poem.* How can anything call itself a poem if it mistrusts language and the power of the poetic imagination? Is not all mystery made lucid to the poetic imagination, and precisely in language? But the often ill-advised left side of the brain is wrong to thus object. Let us ask it to

consider a poem whose last line proclaims this heresy, whose last line in fact is, "There are limits to imagination." This is Robert Hass's beautiful "Homeric Simile." It purports to be a simile about how a soldier falls in a certain Japanese movie, and it likens him chiefly to a great pine tree, an image which does not appear in the movie:

HOMERIC SIMILE

When the swordsman fell in Kurosawa's
    Seven Samurai
in the gray rain,
in Cinemascope and the Tokugawa dynasty,
he fell straight as a pine, he fell
as Ajax fell in Homer
in chanted dactyls and the tree was so huge
the woodsman returned for two days
to that lucky place before he was done with
    the sawing
and on the third day he brought his uncle.

They stacked logs in the resinous air,
hacking the small limbs off,
tying those bundles separately.
The slabs near the root
were quartered and still they were awkwardly
    large;
the logs from midtree they halved:
ten bundles and four great piles of fragrant wood,
moons and quarter moons and half moons
ridged by the saw's tooth.

The woodsman and the old man his uncle
are standing in midforest
on a floor of pine silt and spring mud.
They have stopped working
Because they are tired and because

I have imagined no pack animal
or primitive wagon. They are too canny
to call in neighbors and come home
with a few logs after three days' work.
They are waiting for me to do something
or for the overseer of the Great Lord
to come and arrest them.

How patient they are!
The old man smokes a pipe and spits.
The young man is thinking he would be rich
if he were already rich and had a mule.
Ten days of hauling
and on the seventh day they'll probably
be caught, go home empty-handed
or worse. I don't know
whether they're Japanese or Mycenaean
and there's nothing I can do.
The path from here to that village
is not translated. A hero, dying,
gives off stillness to the air.
A man and a woman walk from the movies
to the house in the silence of separate fidelities.
There are limits to imagination.

At one critical point in the narrative—and the simile is offered as a story—the poet heightens the mystery of metamorphosis by dramatizing the process itself:

They have stopped working
because they are tired and because
I have imagined no pack animal
or primitive wagon . . .
They are waiting for me to do something
or for the overseer of the Great Lord
to come and arrest them . . .

I don't know
whether they're Japanese or Mycenaean
and there's nothing I can do.

We are asked to believe that the poem takes place at the limits of imagination, where the poet's debilitating reluctances threaten to overpower his fancy and drag it back into the territory of the literal. And the poem shows us, by exhibiting its own process, how the energy is to be found, in the process of simile itself, to mix modes and times and feelings in ways that are disturbing and mysterious and, for our souls' sakes, necessary.

Here I want to posit three roles a poem may take, and to suggest that one of these roles accounts for the stance a poem takes. I offer these three stances not to head off the proper surprise of a new poem but as an exercise in resilience, the way you might strengthen your eyesight by looking at objects near, middling, and far in regular succession. I think of them as three *reasons* for poetry, identifiable genetically with the DNA impulse which starts a poem growing. The reason behind a

poem shapes its growth and determines the way it is delivered. To stretch the metaphor further, it determines how the poem is to be picked up and spanked into breath by the reader.

If every poem is new, it is also associated in its own mind, and ideally in the reader's, with other poems of its species. Poems hold one another in place in our minds, Robert Frost said, the way the stars hold one another in place in the firmament.

The three roles I envision are these:

1) The poet as dissident. Underlying poems conceived by the poet as dissident is a social criticism, whether of a tyranny like George III's or Stalin's, of an abuse, like nuclear pollution, or of a system, like capitalism. As an activist poet, the dissident is likely to be formally radical, since the large metaphor of his work is revolution, but not necessarily.

2) The poet as apologist. Underlying poems conceived by the poet as apologist is acceptance or approval of the human and social predicament of his tribe. However much the poem may focus on errors or imperfections in its subject, there is implied an order or decorum in the model. Often the poem's mode is praise, overt or implicit, of the specific subject or of the human condition. Every work of art, the Christian apologist W. H. Auden said, is by its formal nature a gesture of astonishment at that greatest of miracles, the principle of order in the universe. The poet as apologist is apt to have a pronounced, symmetrical sense of form, but not necessarily.

3) The third and commonest stance of the poet is the poet as solitary. While the poem by the poet as solitary will sometimes take the stance of talking to itself, more often it speaks from the poet as individual to the reader as another individual, and intends to establish a limited, intense agreement of feeling. There is no implicit agreement about social needs or predicaments. Such solitary experiences, and they make up most of lyric poetry, carry on their backs the world they are concerned with, like itinerant puppet-shows. They create a momentary event where the poet and the reader dwell together in some mutual astonishment of words. The best teacher I ever had told us a lyric poem can only say one of three things. It can say "Oh, the beauty of it" or "Oh, the pity of it," or it can say "Oh."

This is a crude trinity, and if useful at all, useful at the elementary level of detecting and dispelling false expectation. I will rehearse the three roles with some examples.

If a poet is committed to an overriding social grievance, as currently some of the best European, Latin American, and United States minority writers are, the poem is best read as a kind of ceremonial rite, with a specific purpose. A dissident poem aspires to be an effective ritual for causing change.

If a poet feels, on the other hand, (to quote an easygoing character in one of my own poems) that the human predicament "is just a good bind to be in," the poem should be read as an occasional poem, occasioned by some instance—however flawed or imperfect—of an existing order. An apologist poem aspires to be a celebration.

If a poet thinks of himself only as a man or woman speaking to men and women, the poem should be read simply as poem. A solitary's poem is a message written on one person's clean slate to be copied on another person's clean slate as an exercise in person-hood. A solitary poem wants to become a little universe, or a charade.

It is my cheerful illusion that these are fairly clear distinctions to apply to modern poems. Though I apply them to poems, they reflect intentions, brief or long-standing, of the poet who aligns himself with them. They shade into one another, and readers would disagree about many borderline cases. But at best, they could be helpful in determining how a poem wants to be read.

Here is an attractive example of a militant poem, by a poet who I think was twelve years old at the time.

THE CEMETERY BRIDGE

Well, as you all should know, there's a dead man
in the George Washington Bridge.
How he got there, they was digging and drilling
these real deep holes for the pillows
of the George Washington Bridge.
While they was digging and drilling, a man fell in.
Of course he was dead, but we will never know
    for sure.
So they pay his family millions of dollars
so they won't have to dig him up and start
    all over again.
Please spread this story around.

Terrence Des Pres, a very gifted prose writer, believes that all serious writing today must be politically committed writing, militant writing. In a letter he wrote to me soon after we had debated this for the first time, he put it this way: "Most Anglo-American poetry (excluding old guys like Milton and Blake) looks at life and says, that's how it is, that's the human condition. Political poetry also says that's how things are, but then, instead of settling for the hard comfort of some 'human condition,' it goes on to say, this is not how things must be always. Not even death is that final, when you consider that some men are forced to die like dogs, while others have the luck to die human. Political poetry is concerned with precisely this distinction. And if, by way of example, we ardently oppose the designs of state and the powers that be—as, say, during the Viet Nam war years—is this opposition not a true part of our experience? and if so, is it not a fit subject for poems? Fitter, perhaps than the old laments like lost love, the soul's virginity, etc?"

The poem Terrence Des Pres sent with that letter is by the Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert.

FIVE MEN

1

They take them out in the morning
to the stone courtyard
and put them against the wall

five men
two of them very young
the others middle-aged

nothing more
can be said about them

2

when the platoon
level their guns
everything suddenly appears
in the garish light
of obviousness

the yellow wall
the cold blue
the black wire on the wall
instead of a horizon

that is the moment
when the five senses rebel
they would gladly escape
like rats from a sinking ship

before the bullet reaches its destination
the eye will perceive the flight of the projectile
the ear record a steely rustle

the nostrils will be filled with biting smoke
a petal of blood will brush the palate
the touch will shrink and then slacken

now they lie on the ground
covered up to their eyes with shadow
the platoon walks away
their buttons straps
and steel helmets
are more alive
than those lying beside the wall

3

I did not learn this today
I knew it before yesterday

so why have I been writing
unimportant poems on flowers

what did the five talk of
the night before the execution

of prophetic dreams
of an escapade in a brothel
of automobile parts
of a sea voyage
of how when he had spades
he ought not to have opened
of how vodka is best
after wine you get a headache
of girls
of fruit
of life

thus one can use in poetry
names of Greek shepherds
one can attempt to catch the colour of
    morning sky
write of love
and also
once again
in dead earnest
offer to the betrayed world
a rose

The intention of Herbert's subtle and moving poem seems to be to convert poets from writing the old laments like lost love, the soul's virginity, etc., and to enlist them in action to change their political circumstances, if not indeed their own political natures. The poem does not simplify. It retains the demanding reticence of poetry. As a conscience, the reader responds, or not, to its call for change, as clear and ambiguous as Rilke's "You must change your life."

Here is a third example of dissident poetry, a fragment of one of June Jordan's powerful statements about our society's way with black citizens. Irony is its heavy device, but it is pure enough poetry not to say all it means, not to mean only what it says.

POEM: On the Murder of Two Human Being Black Men, Denver A. Smith and
his unidentified Brother, at Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1972

What you have to realize is about private property
like
for example do you know how much the
    president's
house weighs in at

do you know that?

But see it's important because obviously
that had to be some heavy building some kinda
heavy heavy bricks and whatnot
dig
the students stood outside the thing
outside of it
and also
on the grass belonging to somebody else
    (although who the hell can tell who owns
    the grass)
but
well governor / he said the students
in addition
to standing outside the building that was
The House of The President
in addition to that and in addition to
standing on the grass that was growing
beside that heavy real estate
in addition (the governor said) the students
used
quote vile language unquote and
what you have to realize about quote

vile language unquote
is what you have to realize about private property
and
that is

you and your mother and your father and your
sister and your brother
you
and you and you
be strictly lightstuff on them scales
be strictly human life
be lightstuff
weighing in at zero
plus
you better clean your language up

don't be calling mothafuckas *mothafuckas*
pigs *pigs*
animals *animals*
murderers *murderers*
you
weighing less than blades of grass the last
dog peed on
less than bricks smeared grey by pigeon shit
less than euphemisms for a mercenary and
a killer
you be lightstuff
lightstuff on them scales . . .

From *New Days*, © 1973 June Jordan

For all that it is implicit, in these three poems we have just looked at, that the role of the dissident is the most *urgent* role at a time like ours, I think there is never any deliberate choosing, except on grounds of temperament —the poem's or the poet's—between the three roles. The time is always *a time like ours*. Ours is simply the one we must respond to truly. Each of the three responses I am trying to delineate asks a great deal of the writer and the reader. The three short poems I offer as examples of apologist poems don't shirk moral responsibility, but rather contain it within a system whose imperfection they take as given. The imperfections of society, in the poems about equating money with life (in "The Cemetery Bridge"), or countenancing political murders (in "Five Men"), or race murder (in June Jordan's poem) can *only* be responded to militantly, by poet and reader. The imperfections in human nature exhibited in the next three poems are sources of grief but lie beyond grievance. They invite various and complex response.

On Looking for Models

The trees in time
have something else to do
besides their treeing. What is it.
I'm a starving to death
man myself, and thirsty, thirsty
by their fountains but I cannot drink
their mud and sunlight to be whole.
I do not understand these presences
that drink for months
in the dirt, eat light,
and then fast dry in the cold.
They stand it out somehow,
and how, the Botanists will tell me.
It is the "something else" that bothers
me, so I often go back to the forests.

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Traveling through the Dark

Traveling through the dark I found a deer
dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.
It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:
that road is narrow; to swerve might make
    more dead.

By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of
    the car
and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;
she had stiffened already, almost cold.
I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the
    reason—
her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,
alive, still, never to be born.
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;
under the hood purred the steady engine.
I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust
    turning red;
around our group I could hear the wilderness
    listen.

I thought hard for us all—my only swerving—
then pushed her over the edge into the river.

From *Traveling through the Dark* by William Stafford.
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The Whipping

The old woman across the way
    is whipping the boy again
and shouting to the neighborhood
    her goodness and his wrongs.

Wildly he crashes through elephant ears,
    pleads in dusty zinnias,
while she in spite of crippling fat
    pursues and corners him.

She strikes and strikes the shrilly circling
    boy till the stick breaks
in her hand. His tears are rainy weather
    to woundlike memories:

My head gripped in bony vise
    of knees, the writhing struggle
to wrench free, the blows, the fear
    worse than blows that hateful

Words could bring, the face that I
    no longer knew or loved . . .
Well, it is over now, it is over,
    and the boy sobs in his room,

And the woman leans muttering against
    a tree, exhausted, purged—
avenged in part for lifelong hidings
    she has had to bear.

From *Words in the Mourning Time* by Robert Hayden.
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My third category will probably strike readers as having the same spineless-ness as the category *other* in a quiz or *don't know* in a poll. But in the art which speaks most eloquently for human peculiarity, the poet as solitary seems as serious and deliberate as the socially active or passive poet. He is not at odds with either of them but for the moment removed from them by some concern he can share only person-to-person. Here then are three solitary poems.

THE BOXCAR POEM

The boxcars drift by
clanking

they have their own
speech on scored
wood their own
calligraphy
Soo Line
they say in meadows
Lackawanna quick at crossings
Northern Pacific, a
nightmurmur, Northern
Pacific

even empty
they carry
in dark corners
among smells of wood and sacking
the brown wrappings of sorrow
the rank straws of revolution
the persistence of war

and often
as they roll past
like weathered obedient
angels you can see
right through them
to yourself
in a bright
field, a crow
on either shoulder.

From *Boxcars*, published by the Ecco Press,
copyright © 1973 by David Young.

KEEPING THINGS WHOLE

In a field
I am the absence
of field.
This is
always the case.
Wherever I am
I am what is missing.

When I walk
I part the air
and always
the air moves in
to fill the spaces
where my body's been.

We all have reasons
for moving.
I move
to keep things whole.

Thrown from the boxcar of the train, the bear
rolls over and over. He sits up
rubbing his nose. This must be
some mistake,
    there is no audience here.
He shambles off through the woods.

The forest is veined with trails,
he does not know which to follow.
The wind is rising, maple leaves turn up
their silver undersides in agony, there is a
smell in the air, and the lightning strikes.
He climbs a tree to escape. The rain
pours down, the bear is blue as a gall.

There is not much to eat
in the forest, only berries,
and some small delicious animals
that live in a mound and bite your nose.

The bear moves sideways through a broom-straw
    field.
He sees the hunters from the corner of his eye
and is sure they have come to take him back.
To welcome them, (though there is no calliope)

he does his somersaults, and juggles
a fallen log, and something
    tears through his shoulder,
he shambles away in the forest and cries.
Do they not know who he is?

After a while, he learns to fish, to find
the deep pool and wait for the silver trout.
He learns to keep his paw up for spiderwebs.
There is only one large animal, with trees
on its head, that he cannot scare.

At last he is content to be
alone in the forest,
though sometimes he finds a clearing
and solemnly does his tricks,
though no one sees.

A poem like Zbigniew Herbert's "Five Men" must necessarily imply that its reasons are the most urgent reasons a poem can have, that other reasons are somehow trivial. (Poems themselves are sometimes bullies, or seem to be.) But this is true only as one hypothesis precludes another. Poetry has always resisted being used as propaganda simply because, like other fully created things, it contains and rejoices in contradictions. "When you organize one of the contradictory elements out of your work of art," Randall Jarrell tells us, "you are getting rid not just of it, but of the contradition of which it was a part; and it is the contradictions in works of art which make them able to represent to us—as logical and methodical generalizations cannot—our world and our selves." Contradiction, complexity, mystery—these are not useful qualities in propaganda.

If some of my suggestions about how to *open* ourselves as readers are valid, they mean that we must be ready to be astonished, even when that is uncomfortable and morally expensive. When we engage a poem we should credit it with infinite options, not just the three which I have labored, which may strike the reader as obvious or incomplete or wrong. Whatever a poem is up to, it requires our trust along with our consent to let it try to change our way of thinking and feeling. Nothing without this risk. I expect hang-gliding must be like poetry. Once you get used to it, you can't imagine not wanting the scare of it. But it's more serious than hang-gliding. Poetry is the safest known mode of human risk. You risk only staying alive.

WILLIAM MEREDITH, a poet and professor of English at Connecticut College since 1965, was consultant in poetry at the Library of Congress from 1978 to 1980. His most recent book of poems is *The Cheer* (1980), published by Alfred A. Knopf. Others include *Hazard the Painter* (1975), *Earth Walk: New and Selected Poems* (1970), *The Wreck of the Thresher and Other Poems* (1964), *The Open Sea and Other Poems* (1958), and *Love Letter from an Impossible Land* (1944).

Recent Publications

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Boxes for the Protection of Rare Books: Their Design and Construction

1981. 290 p. (SN 030-000-00125-9) $18. Compiled and illustrated by Margaret R. Brown with the assistance of Don Etherington and Linda McWilliams, Preservation Office. A National Preservation Program Publication.

This publication includes step-by-step instructions and line drawings on the construction of eight book boxes that will provide a high degree of protection to volumes singled out for their rarity, value, aesthetic qualities, or condition. The material is presented in a loose-leaf format so that particular drawings can be used as guides at the workbench. A description of the box precedes each set of directions and drawings. The construction methods specified allow for flexibility, so that each design can be tailored to the size and shape of particular volumes and to their use within a collection.

Matting and Hinging of Works of Art on Paper

1981. 32 p. (SN 030-000-00134-6) $3.50. Compiled by Merrily A. Smith and illustrated by Margaret R. Brown, Preservation Office, Research Services. A National Preservation Program Publication.

This comprehensive presentation of certain techniques for matting and hinging developed and used by the Library of Congress will serve as a standard reference tool for paper conservators, custodians, and curators in libraries and archives. The designs and methods of construction presented are those currently used in the Library's Restoration Office and are an outgrowth of the conservation workshop notes which were prepared by its staff as instructional material for new members and for seminars provided for outside groups. Fifteen detailed illustrations accompany instructions for making standard mats, sink mats, double-sided mats, and polyester slings. Also included are a glossary, lists of supplies and suppliers, and a wheat starch paste recipe.

Musical Instruments in the Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection at the Library of Congress, a Catalog: Volume I, Recorders, Fifes, and Simple System Transverse Flutes of One Key

1982. 349 p. (SN 030-000-00135-4) $15. Compiled by Michael Seyfrit, Music Division.

The sixteen hundred flutes and other woodwind instruments that Dayton C. Miller left to the Library of Congress in 1941 constitute what is probably the largest collection in the world of one type of instrument. This is the first of a projected seven-volume catalog of the instruments in the collection. There are illustrations of all 273 instruments described, as well as bore graphs, line drawings, X-rays, photographs of the collection on exhibit, and over five hundred detail photographs. The entries provide extensive data on the construction, condition, performance characteristics, appearance, and acquisition of each instrument. Dr. Seyfrit provides comprehensive definitions of many terms used in the catalog, indexes of instrument makers, places of manufacture, Dr. Miller's acquisition sources, and appendixes of instrument numbers and acquisition dates.
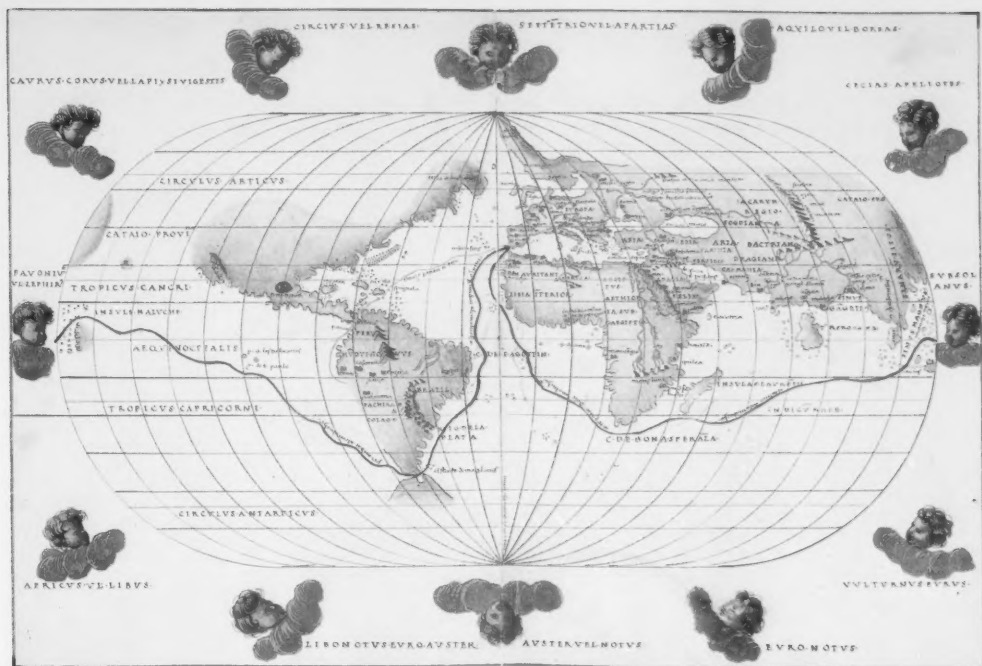
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Manhattan. This map was drawn on site in 1639 for the West India Company of Holland. It is reproduced on page 166 in this issue of the *Quarterly Journal.* 19⅞ x 28¾ inches. $15.00 (plus $1.50 for shipping and handling).

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